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THE VAJRA HEART TANTRA

by Dudjom Lingpa

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The Vajra Heart Tantra
A Tantra Naturally Arisen from the Nature of Existence
from the Matrix of Primordial Awareness of Pure Perception
by
Dudjom Linpga

Translated from the Original Tibetan
Under the Guidance of Gyatrul Rinpoche
By B. Alan Wallace

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Preface

The text translated here as The Diamond Heart Tantra: A Tantra Naturally Arisen from the Nature of Existence from the Matrix of Primordial Awareness of Pure Perception[1] is among the principle "mind treasures" of Dudjom Lingpa (1835-1904), one of the great Dzogchen masters of the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism in recent history. Commonly known among Tibetans as Neyluk Rangjung (Naturally Arisen from the Nature of Existence), it is regarded as a general commentary to another of Dudjom Lingpa's great works, Buddhahood Without Meditation: A Visionary Account Known as Refining Apparent Phenomena, which has been beautifully translated into English by Richard Barron under the guidance of Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche.[2]

Also known as Garwang Dudjom Pawo, Dudjom Lingpa was born in the Golok region of eastern Tibet on the tenth day of the first month of the Sheep Year. According to a number of ancient and recent

prophecies, as written by one of his own subsequent emanations, H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche, his previous incarnations include the following masters of the Buddhist tradition:

1. Nuden Dolje Chang: the buddha who bestowed empowerments upon all the thousand buddhas of this fortunate eon.

2. Sariputra

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1 Tibetan title: Dag snang ye shes drva pa las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po. Sanskrit title: Vajrahrdayasuddhadhutijnanaharesrilamjatiyatisma. Collected Works of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche. The following concise biography of Dudjom Lingpa is drawn from the following texts: Tulku Thondup, The Origin of Buddhism in Tibet: The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa (Marion, MA: Buddhayana, 1984); Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism, ed. Harold Talbot (London: Wisdom, 1986); Dudjom Lingpa, Buddhahood Without Meditation: A Visionary Account Known as Refining Apparent Phenomena (Nang-jang), trans. from the Tibetan under the direction of Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche by Richard Burton (Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing Co., 1994; Dudjom Rinpoche, The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, trans. and ed. by Gyurme Dorje with Matthew Kapstein (Boston: Wisdom, 1991); and H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche Jigdral Yeshe Dolje, Dudjom Tersar Ngondro (New York: Yeshe Melong, 1992).

2 Dudjom Lingpa, Buddhahood Without Meditation: A Visionary Account Known as Refining Apparent Phenomena (Nang-jang), trans. from the Tibetan under the direction of Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche by Richard Burton (Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing Co., 1994.

3. Saraja
4. Krsnadhara
5. Humkara
6. Drogpen Kyeuchung Lotsa

7. Smrtijnana
8. Rongzom Chokyi Zangpo
9. Dampa Deshek
10. Lingje Repa
11. Chogyal Pagpa
12. Drumgyi Karnagpa
13. Hepa Chojung
14. Tragtung Duddul Dorje
15. Sonam Deutsen
16. Duddul Rolpa Tsel

According to Dudjom Lingpa's own autobiography,[3] during the first three years of his life, he saw hosts of dakinis and protective deities looking over him. On one occasion a dakini led him to Oddiyana, the realm of the dakinis, where he encountered Vajravarahi, foremost of the dakinis, from whom he received great blessings. During his youth, he also spent one human day at Palri on the subcontinent of Ngayab (Skt.?), which equalled twelve years in the time of that realm. There he received teachings from Padmasambhava himself. On various occasions he also received prophecies from Padmasambhava's consort Yeshe Tsogyal, who she cared for him her like own son.

3The Autobiography of the bDud jom-ging pa (gTer chen chos kyi rgyal po khrag 'thung bdud 'joms gling pa'i rnam par thar pa zhal gsung ma), by Dud joms Ling pa, ed by Padma-lung rtogs rgya-mtsho (Dehradun: G.T.K. Lodoy and N. Gyaltsan, 1970).

Dudjom Lingpa had eight renowned sons, including Jigme Tenpey Nyima, the Third Dodrup Chen Rinpoche (1865-1926), who was a consummate scholar and adept of both the sutras and tantras. During the course of his life, Dudjom Lingpa performed many miracles, and he reached the highest stages of realization of the stages of generation and completion as well as the Great Perfection. It is said that thirteen of his disciples attained the Rainbow Body, and one thousand became vidyadharas through gaining insight into the essential nature of awareness.

Dudjom Lingpa's subsequent incarnations include His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, his mind emanation and the editor of the Tibetan version of the text translated here; Tulku Kunzang Nyima (Tib. sPrul sku kun bzang nyi ma) his speech emanation; Sonam Detsen, his body emanation; Jamyang Natsok Rangdrol, also known as Dorje Dragtsel Lingpa, an emanation of his enlightened activities; and Tulku Drachen (Rahula, sp?), an emanation of his enlightened qualities.

In one of Dudjom Lingpa's dreams, a devaputra named Dunggi Zurphu prophesied that the benefit from his profound hidden treasures would go west, saying, "Those deserving to tamed by you dwell in human cities to the west." In the hope to help fulfill that prophesy, the present translation of his hidden treasure The Diamond Heart Tantra was made under the guidance of the Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche, who has been teaching in the west since 1972. Gyatrul Rinpoche received the oral transmission of this text three times from three of the emanations of Dudjom Lingpa: in Tibet he received it from Jamyang Natsok Rangdrol and from Tulku Kunzang Nyima, and later in Nepal he received it from His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, the Supreme Head of the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism.

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Beginning in the autumn of 1995, I read through this text once with Gyatrul Rinpoche, receiving many points of clarification from him. While working on a first-draft translation, he went through the text with me line- by- line, carefully correcting errors in my translation and elucidating points of lingering uncertainty in my own comprehension of the text. I am deeply grateful to him for opening this treasure to me for the benefit of all those who may read our translation. I am also indebted to Dr. Yeshi Dhonden and Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso for elucidating some points of the text.

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Preface Notes

Tulku Thondup, The Origin of Buddhism in Tibet: The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa (Marion, MA: Buddhayana, 1984).

1. gTer ston las rab gling pa, aka bSon nams rnam rgyal, aka. gNyags la
bsod nams (sp?) (1856-1926)
Disciple of 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rtse'i dbang po rdo rje gzi brjid rtsal
(1820-1892), who was the founder of the Ris med movement, and an incarnation of Vimalamitra His five incarnations include Ka thog mkhyen rtse chos kyi blo gros (1893-1959, aka rDzong gsar mkhyen rtse.
Disciple of Nyo shul lung rtogs bstan pa'i nyi ma (sp?).
Disciple of dPal sprul rin po che, O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po
(1808-1887)
Disciple of Third rDo grub chen Rinpoche

2. bDud 'joms gling pa (1835-1904) from mGo log
First bDud 'joms, aka Giley Terton and Chagkong Terton
Incarnation of sKye'u chung lo tshva, a disciple of Padmasambhava, and
of gTer chen bdud 'dul rdo rje (1615-1672).
Had eight renowned sons, including 'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma, the Third Dodrup Chen Rinpoche (1865-1926), whose mother was bSod nams mtsho.
Another of his consorts, Sera Khandro, composed a superb commentary to his Nangjang.
Reincarnated as sPrul sku pad ma mam rgyal (?) (-1957) and Dudjom
Rinpoche, 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, (1904-87)

Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism, ed. Harold Talbot (London: Wisdom, 1986).

From Autobiography of the Terton dud jom Ling pa (1835-1904)
gTer chen chos kyi rgyal po khrag 'thung bdud 'joms gling pa'i rnam par thar pa zhal gsung ma. By Dud joms Ling pa. Published by Dupjung Lama, 1978)
p. 48b. From a dakini he received instructions and discovered in Bater
Mountain instructions on how and where he would find a prophetic guide (as well as a rosary from Saraha and an image of Tara made

from red sand) from Ngulgo Mountain, enabling him to discover the Terma from Ngala Tagtse by lower Ser Valley .
p. 49b. As soon as he arrived at Bater Mt., a rock fell down from the mountain, revealing the treasures beneath it.

Dudjom Lingpa, Buddhahood Without Meditation: A Visionary Account Known as Refining Apparent Phenomena (Nang-jang), trans. from the Tibetan under the direction of Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche by Richard Burton (Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing Co., 1994.
Born tenth day of the first month of the Sheep Year.
During the first three years of his life he saw hosts of dakinis and protective deities looking over him.
On one occasion a dakini led him to Oddiyana, the realm of the dakinis,
where he encountered Vajravarahi, foremost of the dakinis, from whom he received great blessings.

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He visited dPal Ri on the subcontinent of Nga yab, s;pending one human day, which equalled twelve years of the time of that domain.
There he received teachings from Orgyen Rinpoche.
He received prophecies from Yeshe Tsogyal and she cared for him like her son.
He performed many miracles; he perfected the stages of generation and completion and well as the Great Perfection.
Thirteen of his disciples attained the Rainbow Body, and one thousand became vidyadharas.
In his dreams, a devaputra named Dung-gi Zur phud prophesied that the benefit to beings deriving from his profound hidden treasures would go west, saying, "Those cities of human beings to the west hold those deserving of being tamed by you," and "The sounding of the conch shell in the west is a sign of your fame increasing. The shining of rays of sunlight in pits in the ground is symbolic of those you will tame."

Dudjom Rinpoche, The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, trans. and ed. by Gyurme Dorje with Matthew Kapstein (Boston: Wisdom, 1991).

Gyatrul Rinpoche:
The five reincarnations of Dudjom Lingpa were:
Mind: 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje
Speech: sPrul sku kun bzang nyi ma
Body: bSod nams Ide btsan
Enlightened Activity: 'Jam dbyangs sna tshogs rang grol (rDo rje drag rtsal gling pa)
Qualities: sPrul sku Drachan (Rahula, sp?)
The body and speech emanations passed away on the same day, early in 1958.

Gyatrul Rinpoche received the oral transmission of this text twice in Tibet from 'Jam dbyangs sna tshogs rang grol and from sPrul sku kun bzang nyi ma, and later in Nepal he received it again from 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje.

H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, Dudjom Tersar Ngondro (New York: Yeshe Melong, 1992).

Dudjom Lingpa = Gar dbang bdud 'joms dpa' bo

Previous Line of Incarnations, according to Dudjom Rinpoche, past treasures and spiritual precepts as well as the mind and speech of the following previous vidyadharas:
1. Nus ldan rdo rje 'chang: the Buddha who bestowed empowerments upon all the thousand Buddhas of this fortunate eon.
2. Sariputra
3. Saraha
4. Krsnadhara
5. Humkara
6. 'Drogpen Kyeuchung Lotsa (Tib. Brog pan khye'u chung lo tsa)
7. Smrtijnana
8. Rongzom Chokyi Zangpo (Tib. Rong zom chos kyi bzang po)
9. Dampa Deshek (Tib. Dam pa bde gshegs)
10, Lingje Repa (Tib. gLing rje ras pa)
11. Chogyal Pagpa (Tib. Chos rgyal 'phags pa)
12. Drumgyi Karnagpa (Tib. Grum gyi mkhar nag pa)

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13. Hepa Chojung (Tib. He pa chos 'byung)
14. Tragtung Duddul Dorje (Tib: Khrag 'thung bdud 'dul rdo rje)

15. Sodnam Deutsen (Tib. bSod nams lde'u btsan)
16. Duddul Rolpa Tsel (Tib. bDud 'dul rol pa rtsal)
17. Garwang Dudjom Pawo (Tib. Gar dbang bdud 'jomgs dpa' bo)

Garab Dorje = Pramodavajra

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Consultants: Gyatrul Rinpoche, Khenpo Tsering Gyatso, Dr. Yeshi Donden, Prof. Steven Goodman

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THE VAJRA HEART TANTRA

Introduction

Homage to the manifest face of Samantabhadra himself, the omnipresent Lord, the original, primordial ground.1

[4] Because the minds of all the jinas of the three times are of one taste in the absolute nature of reality, there is the Mind Lineage of the jinas. Because the symbolic signs of the space treasury of reality-itself are spontaneously released without reliance upon the stages of spiritual training and practice, there is the Symbolic Lineage of the Vidyadharas. Because the practical instructions naturally arise as an oral lineage and an entrance to the disciples' path, [5] in the manner of filling a vase, revealed by themselves, not by human beings, as an apparitional display of primordial wisdom, there is the Oral Lineage of Individuals. To set forth the great reality in which these three are unified as the spiritual mentor of the world, bless me with the circle of ornaments of the inexhaustible three mysteries of the jinas and jinaputras. The myriad of the oath-bound three roots have granted their permission, so please allow this composition to be brought to completion.

Having concealed the original, primordially pure nature of existence, [6] great intellect-transcending reality-itself, free of conceptual elaboration, by the obscuration of self-concepts and grasping onto duality, individuals are bound by clinging onto the true existence of the deceptive cycle of the three realms. However, there are those who have accumulated vast merit over many eons and are imbued with the power of pure prayers. By arousing the karmic momentum of engaging in the deed of nonaction in great, self-arisen, primordial

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1 This homage is immediately preceded by the syllables "rba, thta thnya ma, rtra, thta khka bdhal)," which are said to be a Tibetan transliteration from the dakini script.

wisdom, for the sake of those fortunate ones who are empowered with respect to the space-treasury of reality-itself, I shall present this king of tantras, a fundamental tantra that has naturally arisen from the nature of being of the sugatagarbha.

Here is the way this tantra first arose. On the evening of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month of the Male Water Dog Year, due to the power of the profound, swift path of the Leap-over, the direct vision of reality-itself appeared; and as a result of a little practice of the path of the method of the stage of generation, [7] I reached the ground of a fully matured vidyadhara. By the power of arriving there, all appearances and mental states dissolved into primordially pure reality- itself, the absolute nature free of conceptual elaboration. Then the very face of the dharmakaya became manifest. After some time, spontaneous appearances arose like this in the form of a buddha-field: on that very occasion of self-arisen, primordially pure, great bliss, my environment was the naturally appearing, real Akanista. This apparitional buddha-field was vast and spacious, with its surface smooth and level, and pliant to the touch. Grassy mountains of medicinal herbs were fragrant with mists of fine aromas. The whole ground was completely covered with various radiant, luminous, clear, sparkling, shimmering, lovely flowers in shades of white, yellow, red, green, blue, and multiple hues. In the four directions were four oceans of ambrosia imbued with eight excellent qualities. [8] On the shores of those great oceans were pebbles of jewels, sand of gold, turquoise meadows, and overarching halos of rainbows. Forests of wish-fulfilling trees flourished in the four cardinal directions, emanating billowing clouds of sensory offerings. Various types of beautiful, emanated birds sang forth the sounds of Dharma with gentle, soothing calls. Various lovely, emanated animals frolicked about and appeared to be

contentedly listening to the Dharma. The whole sky was covered with checkered patterns of lattices of rainbow light. Everywhere the sky was filled with singing and dancing viras and viras, and many goddesses made sensory offerings and devotions.

In the center of that region, in a great, delightful garden, resting against a tree covered with foliage and flowers, there was a vast and lofty jeweled throne supported by eight lions. The branches of the tree were draped with various silk hangings, and full and half-garlands of jewels, and many tinkling peppercorn bells gave rise to the natural sounds of the holy Dharma. Upon that lion-throne was a lotus, [9] sun, and moon seat, upon which was the true Teacher Samantabhadra Saroruhavajra, naturally appearing with the radiance of the ground of reality. His body was blue-black in color, bearing the features of an eight-year-old youth. His right hand displayed the mudra of expounding the Dharma, and his left hand was in the mudra of meditative equipoise. He was adorned with the signs and symbols of Awakening and all the apparel of a sambhogakaya. Within the realm of his ocean-like, limpid, transparent body, naturally appeared all the peaceful and wrathful jinas and myriads of buddha fields and emanations, like bright reflections of planets and stars in a lake. Incalculable rays of blazing light emanated from him, and from their tips appeared various symbolic letters.

Gathered around the Teacher were natural displays of the entire assembly of his apparitional retinue of 84,000 disciples, including Bodhisattva Vidyavajra, Bodhisattva Prajnendra, Bodhisattva Jnanavajra, Bodhisattva Mahasahasrananta, Bodhisattva Prasannatindra, Bodhisattva Anabhogavyuha, Bodhisattva Parabhasa Vasavartin, Bodhisattva Aksendriya, Bodhisattva Srotendriya, Bodhisattva Ghranendriya, [10] Bodhisattva Jihvendriya, and Bodhisattva Kayendriya. They all were gazing at the face of the Teacher, and

they remained silent as they reverently bowed. The Teacher remained silent as he looked into the realm of space. At that time, these natural sounds of reality itself emerged from the realm of pristine space:

Ah. The whole of samsara and nirvana is groundless and rootless.
The Vajra Queen is great space.
The great emptiness of space is the Great Mother.
All phenomena are apparitions

Of reality-itself and the sole nature.
Everything is born from the unborn.
The emergence of arising apparitions ceases.
Causes and conditions are extinguished right where they are.
Thus, the Teacher and the Teaching, the path and its fruits,
In reality-itself are devoid of signs and words.
The many avenues of method and wisdom
Appear as the great, natural event and natural arising.
The space of no-object and great openness
Is limpid, clear, and free of contamination.
All displays of the buddha-field, Teacher, and retinue
Are nonexistent, but from nonexistence they appear as existent.
That we praise with great wonder! [11]

As soon as those sounds occurred, the entire assembled retinue said to the Bhagavan with one voice, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, Pervasive Lord, and Immutable Sovereign, please listen and heed our words! May the Teacher explain why this entire buddha-field, the Teacher, and the assembled disciples are here and tells us whence this all arose."

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The Teacher replied, "O apparitional disciples, listen! Why have these apparitions of primordial wisdom--the buddha-field, Teacher, and disciples arisen? They are for the sake of revealing an entrance to the nonconceptual primordial wisdom of the minds of all the sugatas of the three times in accordance with the faculties of all sentient beings who are wandering in the cycle of existence of the three realms. The vision of the naturally appearing, real Akanista as a buddha-field will reveal the great vision of reality-itself by the great power of wisdom and primordial wisdom. I am the primordial ground, the Teacher who naturally appears from the innate luster of the sugatagarbha, appearing to myself. The innate luster of empty awareness, free of conceptual elaboration, appears as Vidyavajra. The innate luster of the wisdom of identitylessness appears as Prajnendra. The innate luster of the eight collections of consciousness, together with the mental factors, [12] appears as the assembled retinue."

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The Questions of Prajnendra

Then Bodhisattva Prajnendra rose from his seat and asked the Bhagavan, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, if you appear as the innate luster of the sugatagarbha, if I, Prajnendra, appear as the innate luster of wisdom, if Vidyavajra appears as the innate luster of awareness, and if the assembly of male and female bodhisattvas appears from the eight collections of consciousness, together with the mental factors, we should appear in that way to all the sentient beings of the three realms. However, in the midst of delusive appearances of joys and sorrows, friends and enemies, they continue in the three realms of existence, where miseries occur and pure appearances do not. Why is that? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, sentient beings who have been reduced to the ethically neutral ground do not see pure appearances. Impure, delusive mental states and appearances concerning friends and enemies and joys and sorrows are characteristic of ordinary sentient beings. Here inconceivable pure appearances arise due to the great power of wisdom and primordial wisdom to individuals who have previously sat in the presence of the non-human, naturally appearing Teacher, the perfect Buddha, and [13] Orgyen Padmavajra. Those people attained the supreme siddhi after entering the gateway of Vajrayana Dharma and applying themselves diligently to its practice. Then, until the myriads of realms of sentient beings are empty, they bring forth the power of pure prayers, as a result of which they repeatedly arise as Teachers for the sake of the world, teaching in accordance with the individual needs of disciples. Due to the stimulation of their previous karmic momentum, they directly see the truth of reality- itself, and they emerge from the realm of wisdom. To them these pure appearances arise, but they are not minds and

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mental factors. Rather, these appearances are by nature creative displays of manifest, absolute reality. They are not the eight collections of consciousness, but they are not anything else; so they are called by those names. They appear in numerous ways from the

nondual Teacher and retinue. Those known as bodhisattvas have gone well beyond mundane existence, even though they have not become buddhas; and so they are known."

Again Bodhisattva Prajnendra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, so it is. Thus, if the apparitional Teacher and the entire retinue are nondual and not different, there is no point to all the teaching and listening on the part of the Teacher and the assembly of disciples. [14] There is no difference in the quality of everyone's primordial wisdom, so what point is there in putting on the show of teaching and listening? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Prajnendra, in the past the naturally appearing Teacher of disciples known as Sakyamuni, a Teacher like the sun, arose as an emanation like sunlight. The Teacher, those who requested [the Dharma], and the retinue acting as listeners appeared to be teaching and listening to individual sorts of spiritual paths and vehicles for training disciples. Although the Teacher and the retinue were nondual, for the sake of the disciples, various expressions of skillful means were displayed, like an illusionist and his illusion."

The Questions of Mahasahasrananta

Then Bodhisattva Mahasahasrananta reverently bowed to the Bhagavan, and with his palms pressed together he requested, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, so that all sentient beings may be liberated from the ocean of miseries of mundane existence and reach the state of liberation, please grant us profound, practical instructions for manifestly achieving the state of the fully perfected Buddha Samantabhadra in one life and with one body." [15]

The Teacher replied, "O all you assembled disciples, including Mahasahasrananta, listen! The great, sublime path that brings all sentient beings to the grounds and paths of liberation is called the swift path of the clear light Great Perfection. This is the most sublime of all Dharmas, a general synthesis of all paths, the destination of all spiritual vehicles, and an expansive treasury of all secret mantras. However, the only people who will encounter this path will be those who have stored vast collections of merit in many ways over incalculable eons, who have repeatedly made extensive

prayers for the state of perfect Awakening, and who have previously sought the path and established habitual propensities for it in order to reach the path by means of other vehicles. No one else will do so. Why? Under the influence of negative deeds and due to the strength of powerful, devious maras of mental afflictions, even if unfortunate people are present where this vehicle is being explained and heard, their minds will be in a wilderness five hundred yojanas away. [16] Those unfortunate servants of mara, with their perverse aspirations, act contrary to this profound Dharma and respond to it with abuse, false conjecture, repudiation, jealousy, and so on.

On the other hand, those who enter this gateway and implement the meaning [of these teachings] will never be more common than the appearance

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of a star during the daytime. Upon entering [this path], some will dispense with it after acquiring mere understanding and learning, and they will go astray with no sense of conscientiousness. Not engaging in spiritual practice, they will face death as ordinary beings, and they will not achieve liberation. In general, to enter this vehicle and put it into practice, one must have all the following characteristics:

- belief in the Dharma and one's spiritual mentor
- trust in the path without uncertainty
- earnest mindfulness of death and recognition of composite phenomena as being impermanent, thus having little attraction to mundane activities
- contentment with respect to food, wealth, and enjoyments
- insatiability towards Dharma due to great zeal and determination
- unifying one's life and spiritual practice without complaining

If people with mental stability who are not boastful about the mere number of months and years they have spent practicing in retreat see this entrance and practice, they will undoubtedly achieve the supreme state of the Jina Vajradhara in this very lifetime. [17] It is said of other vehicles that after accumulating [merit and knowledge] and purifying obscurations for three countless eons, one finally,

manifestly becomes perfectly enlightened. However, under the influence of karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities over many eons, while one continues through many lifetimes, one is influenced by various types of thoughts and deeds, making it difficult to meet with the path of accumulation and purification. Think carefully about this situation, and you will come to a clear certainty.

Be that as it may, at the present time, due to excellent karmic connections from the past, you have obtained a sublime human life with leisure and

opportunity, and you have encountered the most sublime of Dharmas, the Secret Mantra Vajrayana. This is no time for ultimately holding onto the hope of accumulating [merit and knowledge] for a long time and then finally attaining Awakening. Rather, you must apprehend the ground of your own being for yourself by experiencing the self-nature of the sugatagarbha, the primordial ground that is the path to liberation in this life. Apart from that, the teachings concerning the possibility of achieving the state of liberation as a result of accumulating much karma from one life to another are effective for bringing about temporary happiness in the minds of sentient beings; but buddhahood by that means is extremely difficult. Consider that those teachings may have merely a provisional meaning." [18]

Bodhisattva Mahasahasrananta commented, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, in this present human life one may strive for good, mind-expanding attitudes and for bodily and verbal virtues. Then by practicing at some time in the future the view and meditation of the clear light Great Perfection, the vajra essence of the Secret Mantra, one might possibly achieve liberation. But it is said that it is difficult to achieve liberation merely by practicing in this life. Moreover, it is said that small minded beings, such as sravakas and pratyekabuddhas, cannot fathom the deep and vast Vajrayana Dharma. Is that true or not? If it is true, while there may be differences in quality and capacity in the minds of sentient beings, if it were necessary to transform into a being of the Mahayana class, the small-minded would have to become greater, and there would have to be those whose minds are

so immense that they cannot expand. If that were so, one would have to acquire some Secret Mantra from somewhere other than one's own mind-stream. In that case, I don't know what that would mean. May the Teacher explain!"

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He replied, "O Mahasahasrananta, if you think like that, if you have arrived at the gateway of the Secret Mantra in this present lifetime, you have firm faith of belief in that, [19] and you have strong, unflagging enthusiasm, the time has come to practice. When fortunate people encounter the gateway of the profound Secret Mantra, apart from simply achieving firm faith of belief, they will never have any other clairvoyance, omens, or auspicious circumstances to make them think that now the time has come to practice Secret Mantra. Once you have obtained a human life and encountered the Secret Mantra Dharma and a spiritual mentor, if that is not the time to practice the Great Perfection, there will certainly be no other auspicious circumstance than that in any other lifetime. It is not that sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, ordinary beings and so forth are too small- minded. Rather, due to their previous karma, they do not encounter the gateway of the Secret Mantra. Or even if they do, they have no faith and no belief, and as a result of spiritual sloth and distraction, they do not practice.

Know that this has nothing to do with the specific capacities of people's minds. Do not think that there are differences in the capacities of the minds of all sentient beings. To those fettered by selfishness, I teach that by opening their hearts to all sentient beings throughout space, without concern for their own self-interest, [20] they will see the reality of the nonduality of self and other."

Mahasahasrananta continued, "OTeacher, Bhagavan, if that is the case, is it impossible for them to expand their minds by meditating on the profound mystery of the Great Perfection? Or, even if they meditate on the Great Perfection, must they bring forth the Spirit of Awakening by some other means? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, this Great Perfection is the vehicle to unsurpassed fruition. The realization of that great reality that pervades the

whole of samsara and nirvana is called the ultimate Spirit of Awakening of the ground. Just that is to be apprehended. Apart from that, the so-called Spirit of Awakening that is strenuously fabricated with the intellect is a mind-state in which one views oneself as the meditator and other sentient beings as objects of meditation. That attitude is as confined as a teacup. In the realm of the Great Perfection, the original nature of the great equality of samsara and nirvana, the mode of existence of the ground-itself is known just as it is by means of great, all- knowing, primordial wisdom of omniscience. To speak of having a Spirit of Awakening greater than the vision of great, all-seeing primordial wisdom would be like having water and yet saying you must seek liquid elsewhere. [21] The original, primordially pure ground, the great reality that pervades the whole of samsara and nirvana, is the Spirit of Awakening. Without that knowledge, just the kind sense of compassion and love of parents for their children is an objectifying, conceptual state of mind. With that alone, one might aspire for fortunate rebirth, but hoping that this will lead to buddhahood is as senseless as hoping that the son of a barren woman might become a householder."

Bodhisattva Mahasahasrananta requested, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, may the Teacher reveal the profound path that liberates disciples!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, there appear to be many avenues of skillful means and wisdom that serve as entrances to the city of great liberation. But ultimately taking the mind as the path is the quest for the true path; and once the ground has been determined, one may take reality-itself as the path. Between those two alternatives, first of all here is the way to take the mind as the path.

At the outset, disciples who maintain their samayas initially train their
minds by way of the common, outer preliminaries, namely the Four Thoughts

that Turn the Mind, and the uncommon, seven inner preliminaries. [22] At the conclusion of those, here is the way to engage in the

stages of the main practice of seeking the path.

First of all go to a totally secluded forest, offer prayers of supplication to your spiritual mentor, merge your mind with that of your mentor, then relax for a little while. O Mahasahasrananta, among your body, speech, and mind, which is most important? Who is the agent? Tell me, who is that unchanging, autonomous sovereign? Then to the great benefit of disciples, the acts of teaching, listening, and the nature of the instruction will become perfectly clear."

Then Bodhisattva Mahasahasrananta responded, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, the body is constructed by the mind. When matter and awareness separate following death, the mind follows after one's karma, then it again deludedly grasps onto the appearance of a body. Moreover, one's body in the waking state, one's body while dreaming, and one's bodies following this life are all constructed by the mind of self-grasping. They are temporary transformations that have never existed except as mere appearances to the mind. Therefore, as the mind is the all-performing sovereign, it is of the utmost importance.

A mindless body is nothing more than a corpse, so it has no power. When the body and mind separate, the phenomena of feeling joy and sorrow, reaching the state of buddhahood or wandering about in the three realms of samsara [23] are due to the mental consciousness becoming deluded with respect to objects. So that is certainly the agent.

As for speech, whatever appearances of vocalization arise, they are nothing more than appearances to the mind. Speech has no existence other than the phenomena of vocalization constructed by the mind's conceptualization, so the mind is most important. When the body, speech, and mind are separated

one by one, the mind continues on; the body turns into a corpse; and the speech vanishes altogether; so the mind is definitely the most important.

This is the way the body, speech, and mind are established as being

non-different. In the practice of the stage of generation, one's own body, speech, and mind are regarded as displays of the vajra body, speech, and mind of one's chosen deity. By so doing, they are purified, and liberation is achieved. If they were separate, both the immutable vajra of the body and the unimpeded vajra of the speech would be left behind when the mind is drawn elsewhere. Then when the assembly of the three vajras disintegrated, would the deity not perish? Therefore, they are not different, so the many are ascertained to be of one taste.

Thus, those three are none other than the mind; they are ascertained to be the mind alone; and that is the best and highest understanding."

Again the Teacher asked, "Do you, the all-performing sovereign, have form or do you not? If you do, what type of living being's form do you resemble? [24] Does that sovereign have eyes, ears, a nose, a tongue, and mental cognition or not? If so, where do they exist these days? Where are they? Moreover, do you have a round, rectangular, semicircular, triangular, many-side, or some other kind of shape? Are you white, yellow, red, green, or variegated in color or not? If you are, by all means let me see this directly with my eyes or let me touch it with my hand!

If you are certain that none of those exist, you may have fallen to the extreme of nihilism. Therefore, now disclose to me the reality of samsara and nirvana, joy and sorrow, appearances and the mind, and all their substantial causes."

Mahasahasrananta responded, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, the self has no form, so it is empty of form. Likewise, it has no sound, smell, taste, touch, or

mental objects, so it is empty of each of those. It is empty of shape and color, so it is empty. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and mental cognition all certainly have no existence apart from limpid, clear consciousness itself. Without nihilistically reducing them to nonexistence, the indeterminate manifestations of samsara and nirvana appear to be like an illusionist [25] and his illusions. Thus, I have come to the conclusion that [the mind] is simply an unceasing

agent."

The Bhagavan asked, "O Mind Vajra, tell me, what is the source from which you first originated? Did you originate from earth, from water and fire, from air and space, or did you originate from the four cardinal directions, the eight directions, from above or from below? Investigate the place of origination and that which is originated, and analyze them! Likewise, investigate the location in which you subsequently are present and that which is present, and analyze them!

If this so-called mind were located in the head, when the foot is pierced by a thorn, for instance, there would be no reason for experiencing a sharp pain. If it were located in the feet, why would there be discomfort even if the head and other limbs were amputated? Suppose it were located in the body as a whole. In that case, if unbearable regret and misery arose in the mind when an external piece of clothing, a cup, a house, and other possessions were taken away by others or destroyed and so on, the mind would have to be located in those. If it were located inside, there would be no one who identifies with things outside. If it were located outside, there would be no clinging or grasping onto the body inside. If it is true that it is located in the body nowadays, where will it be located when it is separated from the body? [26] On what will it depend?

Directly point out the body, face, and location of the one who is present. Investigate the location and the environment of the one who is present, and the size and so forth of the agent. Observe! Finally you must investigate the act of

going and the agent who goes, so observe the destination, the path, and the point of departure on the part of the mind, the all-performing agent, and watch how it moves. If you see the act of going and the one who goes, show me the size of the goer and its form, shape, and color."

Mahasahasrananta responded, 'O Teacher, Bhagavan, I have no eyes, and due to their absence, there is nothing that appears as form. Likewise, I have no ears, and due to their absence, there is nothing that appears as sound. I have no nose, and due to its absence, there is

nothing that appears as smell. I have no tongue, and due to its absence, there is nothing that appears as taste. I have no body, and due to its absence, there is nothing that appears as touch either.

Therefore, the five senses as well as their appearances do not exist, so there is no one who is originated. If the one who is originated is not established, from this time onwards the so-called mind is not established and nonexistent. Until now there should have been something bearing attributes called this entity. I am unoriginated emptiness, so the source of origination is empty. As to seeking the place of origination, earth is something I have constructed. [27] Similarly, all phenomena including water, fire, air, and space are nothing other than apparitions of self- grasping alone. So the one who is originated is ascertained to be nonobjectifiable.

I am non-local emptiness, so there is nowhere I am present. As for the so- called body, sores, swelling, goiters, ulcers, and so on may arise in the body that appears in the waking state, but they are not present in the dream-body. Although sores, swelling, goiters, and ulcers may appear to have beset the body and limbs in a dream, they are not present as phenomena in the waking state. As phenomena in the waking state, the body may be wounded or beaten as a king's punishment, but that does not appear on the dream-body. If that happens in a dream, it is not present on the body in the waking state. Similarly, location,

environment, and the agent that appear to be outside or are grasped as being inside are all nothing more than apparitions of myself alone.

Therefore, I am not present in either external or internal phenomena. External and internal phenomena are not present in me. They are apparitions of self-grasping, like an illusionist and his illusions. They are not constructed intentionally as in the case of an illusionist and his illusions. The self arises, so the appearances of others just arise automatically, but they have no location. One may investigate the destination and the agent, but the locus of movement and the destination are all nonobjectifiable; so they do not apply to the nature of me and mine. All phenomena appear while being nothing other than the domain of the self. [28] Moreover, that is the way the

body, speech and mind have never existed separately, and their appearances are of the same taste. In all waking appearances, dream appearances, and appearances after this life, the body, speech, and mind are not different from me. Thus, it is certain that the agent of going and the destination are not established."

The Bhagavan replied, "O Mind Vajra, investigate the dimensions of your so-called mind, then establish and recognize its essential nature. Are both external space and the internal mind the same or different? If they are the same, the essential nature of the mind must be space. If they are different, you would have to agree that space in a dream, space in the daytime, and space after this life are not one but different. If the previous space ceases and the subsequent spaces occur one after the other, each space would be subject to transformation, creation, and destruction. In that case, ascertain the causes and conditions from which they arise. If space manifestly appears in the daytime due to the sun rising in the morning, doesn't the sun cause it to appear in a dream and after this life? Or is it the clear light of your own mind? Don't merely give this lip-service; rather, penetrate this with certainty." [29]

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Mahasahasrananta responded, "OTeacher, Bhagavan, space is indubitably ascertained to be the essential nature of my mind. During the daytime, earth, water, fire, air, the self, others, form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental objects are displayed in the domain of space; and the mind holds them by means of conceptualization. In dream appearances as well, the ground of the mind appears as space, and the entire world, its inhabitants and sense objects are all displayed as they were before. In future lives, too, the essential nature of the mind appears as space, and in that domain the entire world, its inhabitants and sense objects appear in the same manner; they are held by the mind, and one is deluded again and again.

Therefore, space, the self, others, and all sense objects are of one taste, and they are certainly not different. Moreover, it is the vividness of space itself, and nothing else, that makes appearances become manifest. The essential nature of the mind and the ground is space itself. Various appearances occur in the realm of mental

cognition--limpid, clear, forever-present consciousness. The display of those appearances is like the reflections in a mirror or the images of planets and stars in a pool of limpid, clear water. Once limpid, clear consciousness has entered into the central domain of pervasive, empty space, it is directed inwards. [30] At that time, the mind and all appearances disappear and expand infinitely into ethically neutral, pervasive emptiness. I have ascertained that due to self-grasping, great, pervasive emptiness, the essential nature of the ground, arises as the mind and mental factors. The space and vividness are none other than the reality of the limpid, clear mind-itself, which, as a result of conditions, falls into self and other.

Taking just the mind as the path, a person of superior faculties directly experiences the nature of being of thatness, which is reality-itself, realizes the comprehensive view of samsara and nirvana, and achieves liberation in the

pristine domain of space. A person of middling faculties attains conviction in the formless realm, and a person of inferior faculties experiences joy in the form realm. For a person of the lowest faculties, the path is experienced as happiness in the desire realm. May the Teacher explain how this is so!"

He replied, "O Mind Vajra, first of all, merge this mind with external space, and remain in meditative equipoise for seven days. Then fix your attention on a stone, a stick, a physical representation of the Buddha, or a letter, and remain in meditative equipoise for seven days. Then imagine a clear, radiant, five-colored bindu at your heart, fix your attention on it, [31] and remain in meditative equipoise for seven days. As a result, for some people the mind remains blissful, brilliant, and vacuous. That experience, devoid of any thoughts, is like an ocean unmoved by waves, and that is called quiescence imbued with signs. Some cannot inhibit thoughts because the mind is so agitated, and they experience uncomfortable illness and pain in the heart, the vital channel, and so on. Those with unstable minds, with a wind-metabolism, or with unrefined minds may possibly fall into unconsciousness or into a trance. In that case, relax and let thoughts be as they are; and continually observe them with unforgetting mindfulness and revealing introspection. Stillness

without thinking of anything is called stillness in the domain of the essential nature. The fluctuation and appearance of various thoughts is called fluctuation. Not letting any thoughts remain unconscious, but knowing them by means of mindfulness and introspection is called awareness. With that explanation, recognize them.

'Now in order to remain for a long time in the domain of the essential nature, observe motion, keep your body straight, maintain vigilant mindfulness, and observe!' When you say that and put it into practice, fluctuating thoughts do not cease, nor do you get lost in them as usual; [32] rather, they are exposed due

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to mindful awareness. By striving unceasingly at all times, both during and between meditation sessions, finally all gross and subtle thoughts will be calmed in the empty domain of the essential nature. You will remain and become stabilized in an unfluctuating state, in which you will experience joy like the warmth of a fire, clarity like the dawn, and nonconceptuality like an ocean unmoved by waves. Craving this and believing in it, you will not be able to bear being separated from it, and you will cling to it. If you get caught up in joy, this will cast you into the desire realm; if you get caught up in clarity, this will cast you into the form realm; and if you get caught up in nonconceptuality, this will cast you to the peak of mundane existence. Therefore, know that while these are indispensable signs of progress for individuals entering the path, it is a mistake to get caught up in them forever.

That is called ordinary quiescence of the path, and if you achieve stability there for a long time, you will have achieved the critical feature of stabilization in your mind-stream. However, know that among unrefined people in this corrupt era, very few appear to achieve more than fleeting stability. In these times, the chosen deities of some people appear to them, and they settle their attention on the deity. To some, visions of buddha-fields appear, and they stabilize and settle their minds on them. Some especially experience joy, clarity, or nonconceptuality , [33] and they settle there. To some, images of their spiritual mentor, rainbows, light, and bindus appear, so they settle on those, and so forth. Know that due to the functioning of the channels and elements of each individual, there is

no uniformity in their experiences."

Mahasahasrananta asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, please explain how meditative experiences and realizations arise as a result of such practice."

He replied, "O Mind Vajra, in all the tantras, oral transmissions, and practical instructions of the past, awareness is nakedly revealed. Among them, I

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shall not teach more than a mere fraction of the ways signs of experience occur. Due to the unimaginable complexity of individual metabolisms and faculties, there is a correspondingly unimaginable array of experiences. Thus, as I am aware that there is no uniformity, know that I shall speak only in the most general terms.

The indeterminate, unimaginable variety of avenues of experience are inexpressible; but teachers endowed with great experience, who are proficient in accounts of the grounds and paths, and possess extrasensory perception are knowledgeable and lucid due to the power of their great wisdom. On the other hand, vidyadharas [34] up to the stages of full maturity and mastery over their life span may be unfamiliar with the ways in which experiences occur, and yet they know them directly by means of extrasensory perception. Even if they do not, they can free others from [mundane] experience by modifying the instructions and interpreting them [for each individual].

As an analogy, devas, risis, brahmins, acaryas, and so on, who are practicing samadhi, may cultivate samadhi by bringing some seed-syllables to mind. As a result, for whatever task those syllables were used in meditation, later they can accomplish those tasks by reciting those syllables; and on whatever illness they focus, later on men and women can be benefited by reciting those syllables for that illness. Likewise, vidyadharas can intuitively identify all illnesses, or, by revealing techniques of meditation and recitation for that purpose, they can dispel all but a few illnesses that are incurable due to past karma. That being the case, it goes without saying that they can elevate contemplatives' experiences onto the path.

If foolish teachers lacking any of those qualities give instruction to students and say that all [the above] experiences will arise in the mind-stream of a single individual, they are deceiving both themselves and others; and they are

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reduced to being maras to the lives of their students. Why? Unpredictable outer phenomena of apparitions of gods and demons, inner phenomena of various physical illnesses, and secret phenomena of experiences such as mental joy and sorrow may possibly occur. [35] In their instructions on the mind, foolish, stupid teachers explain the causes that give rise to such experiences, and when the experiences occur, they fail to recognize them and instead take them to be illnesses. They compound that by mistaking them for demons, they think anxieties indicate death, and they insist that their students must resort to divinations, astrology, and medical treatment. Then due to seeing the faces of demons and malevolent beings, the students may apply themselves to various rituals and techniques. But whatever they do, it is only detrimental, and it does not benefit them in the slightest, and finally they can only die. Thus, as if he had given them a deadly poison, the teacher becomes a mara for his students. Ponder this point carefully, and be skillful!

Now meditation is introduced by way of terms such as insight, so there are many explanations of the stages of the path. Here on our own path mindfulness is presented as being like a cowherd, and thoughts as being like cows. Their steady, vivid manifestation, without interruption by the various appearances of hope and fear and joy and sorrow is called enmeshed mindfulness. In general, these are some of the signs of progress for individuals who are taking appearances and awareness as the path: [36] You may have the impression that all your conceptual activity is wreaking havoc in your body, speech, and mind, like boulders rolling down a steep mountain, crushing and destroying everything in their path. You may feel a great pain in your heart as a result of all your thoughts, as if you had been pierced with the tip of a weapon. You may have the ecstatic, blissful sense that mental stillness is a joy, but movement is a pain. You may have a vision of all phenomena as brilliant colored particles. You

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may experience intolerable pain throughout your body from the tips of the hair on your head to the tips of your toenails.

Or you may have the sense that even food and drink are harmful, for you are tormented by various afflictions included among the 404 types of identifiable, complex disorders of wind, bile, and phlegm, and so on. You may have unidentifiable afflictions due to paranoia about meeting other people, visiting their homes, or being in town; and you compulsively look with hope to medical treatment, divinations, and astrology. You may experience such unbearable agony that you think your heart will burst. Sleep does not come at night, [37] and even if it does, like someone who is critically ill, you do not remain asleep. When you wake up, your mind is filled with grief and you are miserable, like a camel that has lost its beloved calf. Convinced that there is still some decisive understanding or knowledge you must have, you yearn for it just as a thirsty person longs for water. All kinds of thoughts stemming from the mental afflictions of the five poisons arise one after the other, and you must unbearably follow after them. You may have any manner of experiences of speech impediments and respiratory ailments. All thoughts, which are expressions of the mind, and all appearances of joys and sorrows are experienced as such, so they are called experiences; and they cannot be articulated. All appearances of joys and sorrows are simultaneously forgotten and vanish. You think there is some special meaning for yourself in every external sound that is heard and form that is seen. Thinking that there is something to be learned from the signs and omens that are present in everything you see and feel, including the chirping of birds, you engage in compulsive speculation. Or all external sounds and voices, including those of humans, dogs, and birds, may seem like thorns piercing your heart. [38] Unbearable anger arises due to the paranoid sense that everyone else is slandering you and speaking against you. You may react

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negatively when hearing and seeing others joking around and laughing, and with the sense that they are making fun of you, you may verbally retaliate. Due to the experience of your own suffering,

when observing others, you compulsively long for their happiness. With your mind filled with a constant stream of anxieties, fear and terror arise toward weapons and even your friends; so all phenomena give rise to every kind of hope and anxiety. In this phase, when you get into bed at night, you may see visions of other people who will come the next day; and when you observe visions of their faces, forms, minds, conversations, and demons and so forth, fear, anger, and the obsessive attachment and hatred uncontrollably arise, and you cannot fall asleep.

Some people shed many tears due to their reverence and devotion to their spiritual mentors, their faith and devotion in the [Three] Jewels, their sense of renunciation and disillusionment with the cycle of existence, and their powerful compassion for sentient beings. Some people may find that all their suffering vanishes, and their minds are filled with limpidity and delight, like pristine space. [39] Rough experiences may precede such limpidity. You may have the sense that gods or demons are actually carrying away your head, limbs, and vital organs, leaving behind only a trail of vapor; or you may merely have the sensation of this happening, or it may occur in a dream. Afterwards, all your mental suffering vanishes, and you experience a sense of ecstasy like the sky free of clouds. In the midst of this, four mindfulnesses and various kinds of pleasant and harsh sensations may occur. Spiritual friends who teach this path properly must know and realize that those are not the same for everyone, so bear this in mind!

For one with a fire-metabolism, a sense of joy is prominent; for one with an earth-metabolism, a sense of obscuration is prominent; for one with a water metabolism, a sense of clarity is prominent; for one with a wind- metabolism,

harsh sensations are prominent; and for one with a space-metabolism, a sense of emptiness is prominent. After all pleasant and harsh sensations disappeared into the absolute nature, there is no need to modify thoughts. Rather, by letting them be as they are, everything that arises loses its capacity to help or harm, and you dwell in that state. You may also have an exceptional sense of joy, clarity, and nonconceptuality, [40] visions of gods and demons, and

a small degree of extrasensory perception. The channels and elements function differently from one person to the next, so those with dominant earth and wind elements commonly do not experience extrasensory perception or visionary experiences. Extrasensory perception and visions happen chiefly to fire-element and water-element people.

Now here are the different levels classified by name: superior vision with single-pointed mindfulness, in which movement and mindfulness are unified, is called insight. At this time if the sense of stillness predominates, that is called the union of quiescence and insight. In what way is that vision superior? Previously, even if you watched with great diligence, you were obscured by subconscious movement and by laxity and dullness; so thoughts were hard to see. But now, even without exerting yourself very much, all thoughts that arise become conscious, and you see them exceedingly well. As for the experiential visions at this stage, to some contemplatives, wherever they look, everything that arises appears as divine embodiments and as vibrant bindus. To some, a variety of different seed-syllables, various lights, and all manner of forms appear. To some appear buddha-fields, unknown regions, melodies, songs, and speech by various unknown beings, [41] and indeterminate varieties of many viras and dakinis dancing and displaying various expressions. To some, all sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations appear as all manner of signs and omens. Some have the sense of observing many entities with and without form by means of extrasensory perception.

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have the sense of observing many entities with and without form by means of extrasensory perception.

After becoming thoroughly familiar with that, any kind of sense of joy or sorrow may trigger a unification of mindfulness and conceptualization. Then, like the knots in a snake unraveling, everything that appears dissolves into the external environment; then everything appears to vanish by itself, resulting in a natural release. Appearances and awareness become simultaneous, so things seem to be released simply upon being known. Thus, arising and release are simultaneous. As soon as things merely arise from their own space, they are released back into their own space, like lightning that flashes from the sky and vanishes back into space. Since this appears by observing within, this is called space-release. All these are in fact the unification and concentration of mindfulness and appearances.

After all pleasant and unpleasant experiential visions have dissolved into the absolute nature, consciousness rests in its own state of immaculate limpidity. [42] Whatever thoughts and memories arise, do not cling to these experiences, modify them, or judge them, but let them manifest as they roam about in their own dynamic state. The effort of vivid, steady apprehension, as in the case of the conceptualization of enmeshed mindfulness, dissolves by itself. Consequently, the unsatiated mind compulsively strives after mental objects. With a sense of unfulfillment and deficiency, at times you compulsively engage in much cogitation entailing tight concentration and so on. In this phase, consciousness will come to rest in its own state, mindfulness will manifest, and with little clinging to experiences, it will settle into its own natural state free of modification. Thus, you come to naturally settled mindfulness.

The experiential sense of that is soothing and gentle, with clear, limpid consciousness that is neither benefited nor harmed by thoughts; and you

experience a remarkable sense of stillness without needing to modify, reject, or embrace anything. Thus, if you are not counseled by a good spiritual friend at this time, you may think, 'Now there has arisen in my mind-stream an extraordinary, unparalleled view and meditative state that is difficult to fathom and to be shared with no one else.' As time passes while you place your trust and conviction in that, you may discuss it with no one else and delude yourself. [43] When you come to this situation, even if you speak of it to another spiritual friend, unless that person is skilled in speaking and knows how to listen critically, your knowledge of the path will be terribly mistaken. Therefore, if you get stuck there and your life passes by, that error will tie you down so that you will not transcend the realm of mundane existence. So be aware of this!

In particular, a sense of clarity may result in visions of gods and demons, and in your thoughts you may appear to be suddenly assaulted by demons. At times that may be true. But by regarding that as extrasensory perception and repeatedly dwelling on gods and demons, in the end demons will seem to proliferate. Then by conceptually fabricating gods and demons, and proclaiming your extrasensory perception to others, finally you will be practicing demon meditation, and your mind-stream will be possessed by demons. Your vows and samayas will then deteriorate, and you will stray far from Dharma, get lost in mundane activities of this life, and delude yourself in magic rituals. Without even an iota of contentment, you will follow after food and wealth, and your mind will be bound up with clinging, attachment, and craving. While in that state, when you meet with death, you will be reborn as a malevolent demon. By accumulating the causes of experiencing the environment and suffering of a sky-roving preta, your view and meditation go awry , and you become deluded in the endless cycle of existence. [44]

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When people of medium and inferior faculties have entered this path, indications of the path will inevitably occur, but if they cling to anything, they will be trapped again by that clinging. Knowing that such experiences are highly misleading and unreliable, leave your

awareness in its own state, with no clinging, hopes, fears, rejection, or affirmation. By so doing, those experiences will be naturally released in their own nature, like mist disappearing into the sky. So be aware of that!

O Mind Vajra, specific types of good and bad experiences are unpredictable. All techniques from the time of quiescence until conscious awareness becomes manifest are solely means of bringing about experiences, so anything may happen. Therefore, know that ascertaining everything as experiences is a crucial point and the quintessence of practical advice. Then realize that and bear it in mind!"

Then Mahasahasrananta asked, "O Bhagavan, thus if all pleasant and rough experiences are distant from the path to omniscience and are of no benefit, why should we practice meditation? May the Teacher explain!"

The Bhagavan replied, "O Mind Vajra, individuals with unrefined, dysfunctional minds agitated by conceptualization [45] enter this path; and by undermining the potency of compulsive ideation, their minds become increasingly steady, and they achieve unwavering stability. On the other hand, even if people identify conscious awareness, but do not practice, they will succumb to the faults of spiritual sloth and distraction. Even if they do practice, due to forgetfulness, they will get lost in endless delusion.

The mind--which is like a cripple--and vital energy--which is like a blind, wild stallion--are disciplined by fastening them with the rope of experiences and grasping. Once people of dull faculties have discerned the mind, they control it with the cords of mindfulness and introspection. By so doing, due to experience

and habituation, they have the sense that all subtle and gross thoughts have vanished. Finally, there arises a state of unstructured consciousness devoid of anything on which to meditate. Then when awareness reaches the state of great non-meditation, the spiritual mentor points that out, so they do not go astray. For those purposes, first one undergoes great struggles in seeking the path, one takes roving thoughts as the path, and finally when consciousness comes

upon itself, that is identified as the path. Until the unstructured awareness, or consciousness, of the path manifests and comes upon itself, due to the arousal of one's afflicted mind, [46] one must gradually proceed through rough experiences like those discussed previously."

Again Bodhisattva Mahasahasrananta asked, "O Bhagavan, are thoughts to be cleaned out or not? If they are, must consciousness arise again after the mind has been purified? May the Teacher explain!"

The Teacher replied, "O Mind Vajra, the ties of mindfulness and grasping are dissolved by the power of meditative experiences until finally the ordinary mind of an ordinary sentient being, as it were, disappears. Consequently, compulsive ideation becomes dormant, and roving thoughts vanish into the absolute nature. The vacuous total-ground descends to a state in which the self, others, and objects disappear. One gazes inwards upon clear emptiness with a sense of clinging, and the appearances of self, others, and objects vanish. That is
the total-ground consciousness. Some teachers explain the descended total-ground as the one taste and as freedom from conceptual elaboration, and others say it is ethically neutral. However it is described, in fact one has come upon the essential nature.

Again, a person filled with zeal [47] ascertains that this is not the real path,2 and as a result of meditating, all such emptiness and clear emptiness that

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2Even though one has come upon the essential nature of awareness, if one is complacent with having ascertained that once, that is not the real path, just as taking refuge alone is not sufficient for achieving Buddhahood. Only by continuing in one's meditation practice does all clinging and grasping cease.

are imbued with experiential clinging vanish into the absolute nature as if one were waking up. Thereafter, outer appearances are not impeded, and the threads of inner mindfulness and grasping are cut.

Then one is not bound by the ties of good meditation, and one does not fall back to an ordinary state due to pernicious ignorance. There is forever-present, limpid, luminous consciousness that transcends the conventions of view, meditation, and, conduct. There is no determination of self and object, such that one can say 'this is consciousness' and 'this is the object of consciousness.' There is freedom from clinging in a primordial, self-arisen state in which the mind has experiences. When you come upon a spaciousness in which there is no cogitation and no attentional referent, all phenomena become manifest, for the power of awareness is unimpeded. Thoughts merge with their objects, they disappear as they become nondual with those objects, and they become disintegrated. Since not even one has an objective referent, they are not thoughts of sentient beings; rather, the mind has been transformed into wisdom; the power of awareness is transformed, and stability is achieved there. Know that this is like water cleared of sediment." [48]

The Questions of Prasannatindra

Then Bodhisattva Prasannatindra rose from his seat and addressed the Bhagavan, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, may the Omnipresent Lord, the Immutable Sovereign, listen and attend to me. Is the state of primordial, self-arisen liberation achieved solely by cultivating clear awareness that is inconceivable and ineffable, or is it not? If it is, how is it achieved? If it is not, what is the point of cultivating this? What kind of excellent qualities arise? Please explain this for the sake of disciples."

The Teacher replied, "O Prasannatindra, you listen and bear this in mind, and I shall truly explain this to you. If the forever-present primordial wisdom of the dharmakaya is not realized even though you have practiced achieving stability in this profound path in the very state of conscious awareness free of conceptual elaboration, as soon as you pass away from this life, there are forces to propel you to the form realm and the formless realm;3 but with this alone it is impossible to achieve omniscient buddhahood. Once you have initially identified this path, if the forever-present, primordial wisdom of the dharmakaya is identified due to the power of intense

meditation, that is the wisdom of the path and the creative power of primordial wisdom. [49]

These are the resultant excellent qualities. There is no other space apart from the space inside a pot, and there is no water superior to the water that fills a cup. Likewise, there is no path other than this path of manifest, conscious awareness. Even if you wander down into the impure cycle of existence, that is constructed by the stream of consciousness; and even if, with the virtuous karma of lofty merit, you practice creating deities, meditation, and recitation, that is

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3The Tibetan reads mu bzhi'i khams, literally translated as "realm of the four alternatives," instead of the more common gzugs med khams. The "four alternatives" are the four meditative absorptions of the formless realm, namely, infinite consciousness, infinite space, nothingness, and neither-discernment-nor-nondiscernment.

accomplished with the stream of consciousness; and even if you practice transforming the channels, bindus, and vital energies into displays of the three vajras, it is the stream of consciousness that liberates. Moreover, the manifestation of this alone is the primordially pure ground, which is self-arisen, limpid, clear, nondual, primordial wisdom.

In general, whatever spiritual vehicle you enter, there is no entrance apart from the stream of forever-present primordial wisdom. Furthermore, when ordinary, deluded sentient beings focus on virtue as they chant recitations many times over, that is taught for the sake of the stream of ground-consciousness. Therefore, the stream of consciousness accumulates all karma, so this manifest consciousness itself is unrivaled by any defiled virtue. [50] Moreover, the difference between practicing a mere technique pertaining to the stream of consciousness on the one hand and manifesting consciousness on the other is like that between the sky and the earth. Thus, all extraordinary, excellent qualities are perfected in this manifestation of consciousness.

O son of good breeding, forever-present, primordial wisdom is the inherently clear light of the minds of sentient beings. It has no referent with respect to all appearances and minds, and the manifestation of this is the outer luster of wisdom. The nature of that manifestation is the inner luster of wisdom. That is very different, like the dawn appearing in the sky. If energetic people of superior faculties apply themselves uninterruptedly and single-pointedly to practice, with no essential diversions, finally the creative power of discerning primordial wisdom will be ignited. As a result, the excellent qualities of the view and meditation of the clear light Great Perfection, which is reality-itself, the very nature of suchness, will truly manifest; and they will become spiritually Awakened as Samantabhadra, the original, primordial ground.

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Even individuals who are not of that sort may identify this crucial point of unstructured, self-arisen consciousness, which manifests without meditation, and they may achieve a little stability in that. All other physical and verbal virtues [51] accumulated throughout a galaxy would not come close to the merit of even one part in a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, or a hundred thousand of that. Those people would certainly achieve long-lasting stability in the peak of mundane existence."

Again Bodhisattva Prasannatindra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, may the omnipresent Lord, the Immutable Sovereign listen and attend to me. No matter how much one meditates in that way by taking the mind and consciousness as the path, if that does not result in the fruitional state of liberation or in buddhahood, please show us a method for directly identifying for ourselves the primordially pure Great Perfection, sovereign awareness free of extremes, without having to resort to such a long and difficult path that yields various joys and sorrows but no accomplishment of the fruition. Reveal to us the stages of the path free of hardships, and give us profound, practical instructions to prevent us from falling into error."

He replied, "O son of good breeding, the great, universal ground of all spiritual vehicles is profound emptiness. I shall explain the way to determine the reality of profound emptiness, so listen well! The basis of delusion of all sentient beings of the three realms is [52]

ignorance of oneself alone. Examine the basis and root of its origin, location, and departure. To investigate the basis and root of the initial origin of the I: there is a stream of consciousness that grasps onto the fundamental, pervasive, surrounding space as the self. All appearances and mental states are nonexistent and not established except as mere appearances, so their source of origin is empty.

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To investigate its location where it dwells in the interim: the head is called the head, and it is not given the name I; likewise, hair is hair and not I; the eyes are eyes and not I; the ears are ears and not I; the nose is the nose and not I; the tongue is the tongue and not I; the teeth are teeth and not I; the shoulder-blades are shoulder-blades and not I; the upper arms are upper arms and not I; the lower arms are lower arms and not I; the palms, the back of the hands, and the fingers are not I; the spine is not I; the ribs are not I; the lungs and heart are not I; the liver and its lining are not I; the small intestine, spleen, and kidneys are not I. The thighs, hips, calves, ankles, and all the finger and toe-joints each have their own names, and they are not I. The skin, fat, flesh, blood, lymph, ligaments, tendons, and body hair all have their own names, and they are not established as I. [53]

If the I were to be located in the lower part of the body, there would be no pain if the head and the upper limbs were amputated, so it is not present there. If it were located in the upper body, there would be no pain if lower portions of the body such as the legs were harmed. If it were located inside, there would be no reason why searing pain would be experienced due to the outer body hair and skin being scraped off. Consider whether it is located in the body. When all your clothes, jewelry, food, wealth, and possessions are taken away and used by someone else, misery and intolerable attachment and hostility arise, so it is not located there. Consider whether it is located in external objects. The entire world and its inhabitants would be apprehended as being mine, but in fact all things have their own names, and they are not I. Even if all appearances of the world and its inhabitants apart from the I seem to exist individually, among all dream phenomena, phenomena of this life, and phenomena following this life, the self and all appearances seem to be like the body and its shadow, like

liquid and moisture, and like fire and heat. Thus, the I dominates the entire world and its inhabitants, but the I is not located anywhere.

Finally, to investigate and analyze its destination: the entire phenomenal world is the basis and essential nature of the great phantasm of I, so its destination is naturally empty .[54] All the three realms arise from apparitions of grasping onto the I, so it has nowhere else to go. The being who is an agent does not originate and it is located nowhere, so it follows that it disappears."

Again Prasannatindra asked, "Thus, if it is certain that its origin, location, and destination do not exist and are not established, how do you account for the continuity from one appearance to the next? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, after the consciousness that grasps onto the I has manifested, I and 'mind' emerge from their own space, and they disappear back into their own space. They alternately emerge and withdraw into the vastness of the ethically neutral ground of emptiness. Thus, dream phenomena, phenomena in the waking state, and all the phenomena of the three realms nonexistently arise as mere appearances. Therefore, know that the location of motion, the destination of one who is moving, and the agent are not established."

Again Bodhisattva Prasannatindra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, when grasping onto the I vanishes into the absolute nature, is its continuum not severed? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, even when the appearances and mental states of grasping onto the I vanish into the absolute nature, [55] the ethically neutral ground whose excellent qualities are not manifest acts as the cause of self-grasping. Thus, just that unceasing continuum of the causal ignorance of self-grasping is called the grasping onto the identity of a person."

Prasannatindra asked, "Teacher, Bhagavan, in what way are external

objects empty? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "As for the emergence of grasping onto the identity of apprehended phenomena other than I, let us investigate the way in which all these names, things, and signs are not established. First of all, let us determine the emptiness of the names of the body by investigating the bases of designation of names. To examine that which is called the head: hair is hair and not the head; the eyes are eyes and not the head; the ears are ears and not the head; the nose is the nose and not the head; and the tongue is the tongue and not the head. Likewise, the skin, flesh, bones, blood, lymph, ligaments and so on all appear to have their own names, so they are not established as the head."

Prasannatindra asked, "Teacher, Bhagavan, if you reduce it to its components like that, [56] it is not established, but isn't their configuration called the head?"

He replied, "Son of good breeding, observe that in general there are many cases in which the assembly of those components is not designated as a head. If one person's head were reduced to particles, which were then assembled and shown to others, they would not call it a head. Even if those particles were moistened and formed into a sphere, that would not be designated as a head.

If your head that appears at the time of a dream, your head that appears during the waking state, your head that appears in the past, and your head that appears in the future were all identical, whatever sores, swellings, goiters, moles, and warts you had would have to appear on all those occasions; but they do not. If each of those heads were different, either all the prior heads would have to be cast off, or else this would indicate the oversight that they were not established from the beginning. If you say it is called the head because it is seen to be on top, you should analyze the upper and lower regions of space. Thus, by

investigating how the front, back, upper, and lower regions of space exist, you will determine that it is not established in any of them.

Likewise, upon what is the eye designated? [57] All fluid spheres are

not known by the name of eye. The skin, blood, fat, channels and sinews are not granted the label eye. As in the previous case, the eye does not exist as their assembly either. If you think that a fluid sphere that sees forms is called the eye, observe whether that which sees forms at all times in the past, future, and present, in dream appearances and waking appearances, is this fluid sphere of the present. Self-appearances are due to primordially present consciousness rather than this fluid sphere of the present. Even if you took in hand a hundred million eyeballs facing in one direction, they would not see form.

Likewise, as for the ears, if the flesh, skin, channels, sinews, blood, lymph, and cavities each has its own label and not the appellation of 'ear,' what is called the ear? If you say something is called the ear because it hears sounds, investigate whether that which hears sounds at all times during and after this life, while dreaming and while awake, is the ear. By so doing, you will find that it is the consciousness of the mind that hears and not the form of the present ear. Even if you had in hand countless ears that were listening, they would not hear sounds. This being the case, the ear is primordially not established.

Similarly, by investigating and analyzing the label and real signs of the nose, you find that the flesh, bones, blood, lymph, channels, sinews and cavities all have [58] their own different labels, so they are not established as the nose, nor is it established in their assembly.

If you think that that which smells odors is called the nose and that odors are sensed from this orifice, consider that this orifice is not needed in the dream-state nor in other lifetimes. Consciousness in the intermediate state senses odors

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as well. Therefore, since mental consciousness has no nose, the nose certainly has no objective existence.

Likewise, the tongue is not established in any of the individual components of the flesh, blood, skin, channels and sinews; nor is the label of tongue established in their assembly. If you assert that this which experiences tastes is the tongue, investigate whether or not it is this very tongue that experiences tastes in the dream-state, the

intermediate state, and in other lifetimes; and then you will know.

By investigating the so-called body in terms of the skin, fat, flesh, blood, marrow, bones, and all the channels and sinews, you will find that the body is not established. If they were all reduced to small and minute particles and then massed together, the label of body would not apply. Even if they were moistened and formed into a lump, that would not be a body. If you say that that which experiences tactile sensations is designated as the body, examine: who is the experiencer of tactile sensations while in a dream and the intermediate state? By so doing, that is determined [59] to be mental consciousness itself. Therefore, since the label of body is not applied to the mind, the body does not exist.

Moreover, upon investigating the locus of the so-called arm, the shoulder is not the arm, nor is the upper arm, the forearm, or the palm and fingers the arm; so I say, 'Identify what the arm is and tell me.' You may say that this which performs the functions of the arm is called the arm. But then, examine whether this is that which appears as an arm and performs the functions of an arm in a dream, and whether it is everything that appears as such in the intermediate state. If you do so, you will find that it is not. Rather, you will determine that they are merely appearances to the mind; so the arm is not established except as something imputed upon the mind.

Moreover, upon examining the shoulder, the flesh is not the shoulder, nor are the bones, channels, and sinews. It is not established in any of those individual components, and it is not the assembly of the particles to which they can be reduced, even if you were to moisten them and form them into a lump. Likewise, by carefully examining all the joints, it is ascertained that the basis of designation of that label has no objective existence.

Furthermore, upon what do you designate the name for the appearance of a human being over there? The head is not a human. The five sense faculties [60] are not a human. The label of human is not established in flesh, blood, bones, marrow, channels, sinews, major and minor limbs, or consciousness. Likewise, what is the basis of designation of house? Earth is not a house; as for stone, the name

for house does not apply to it, only stone itself. The label of house does not apply to the pillars, rafters, beams, or foundation; and even if they were piled together, the label of house would be unwarranted. For example, with respect to a cup, its exterior is not a cup, nor is its interior, its mouth or its base, and wood is not a cup. Neither its individual components nor their assembly exist objectively as its basis of designation. Also in the case of a so-called mountain, earth is not the mountain, nor are stones, grass, or trees; and their assembly is also not a mountain. So the name mountain is empty .

To examine the basis of designation of a single stick, its tip is just a tip and not a stick. Its base is nothing other than its base; the wood is nothing other than wood; its burnt ashes are nothing other than ashes; and its ground-up particles are just particles and not a stick. So even that label can only vanish without any objective existence. [61]

Know that earth, water, fire, and air also do not exist in the realm of gross particles, minute particles, or partless minute particles. As for all manner of labels, an illusion is nonexistent and is nothing more than the mere label illusion;

a mirage is nonexistent and is nothing more than a mere label; a dream is nonexistent and is nothing more than a mere label; a reflection is nonexistent and is nothing more than a mere label; a city of gandharvas is nonexistent and is nothing more than a mere label; an echo has no objective existence apart from its mere label of echo; the moon in water is nothing more than the mere words the moon in water; a water bubble has no objective existence apart from the mere words water bubble; an optical illusion has no objective existence apart from its mere label; and a magical emanation has no existence apart from the mere utterance of its name. Like the utterances of the sounds of those names, all bases of designation of uttered names and words of all manner of appearing phenomena are nonexistent; and they are emptiness, which is not established. Recognize that emptiness has no objective existence, and emptiness wholly terminates in the expanse of space. That is practical advice." [62]

Again Bodhisattva Prasannatindra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan,

foolish disciples who are bound by clinging onto true existence cannot realize the mode of existence of fundamental reality-itself simply by way of the nonexistence of the basis of designation of a label. Thus, may the Teacher reveal a way to determine its nonexistence by way of gross and subtle inquiry."

He replied, "O Prasannatindra, it is like this: if a tree trunk appears, is the existence of this trunk permanent, or is it utterly nonexistent? This is the investigation and analysis. If it were permanent, it could not be cut or destroyed, and it would have to be truly existent, impermeable, immutable, impenetrable, and imperishable in every way. But a gash occurs when it is chopped with an ax, so it can be cut, and when it is chopped many times, it is felled and destroyed. Since one becomes many, it is deceptive and not truly existent. Since it can be stained with white and black dyes and powders, it is not impermeable but permeable. Since it is subject to change due to the season:; and circumstances, it

is not immutable. It can be penetrated and destroyed anywhere, [63] so it is penetrable, perishable. This wood can be demolished in any number of ways, so it is perishable. As it does not have even one of the qualities of a vajra, it is ascertained to be nonexistent."

Prasannatindra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, please explain what is a vajra replete with all the seven qualities of a vajra."

He replied, "O Prasannatindra, referring to the existence of a conventional, material vajra is like referring to the son of a barren woman. Material vajras are shown to be made of bone; stone vajras can be destroyed by incinerating them; and iron vajras are melted in fire. They are not truly existent; rather, those conventional vajras are destructible. This space-vajra, which appears everywhere, cannot be cut with weapons or anything else. It cannot be destroyed by objects or circumstances. Devoid of faults or contamination, it is the great basis of the expansion of the cosmos, so it is real. It cannot be contaminated by faults or virtues, so it is impermeable. It is free of change throughout the three times, so it is immutable. Since everything is pierced in emptiness, it is totally impenetrable. [64] It cannot be modified or changed by anything, so it is utterly

imperishable.

This is the space-vajra that appears everywhere. For those who grasp onto substantiality, this is a conventional vajra, and for those who comprehend its nature as unadulterated liberation, this is the ultimate, indestructible vajra. If there were some other object replete with all the seven qualities of a vajra, it would be permanent; but if not, then it is certain that everything is emptiness, which is not established.

Thus, substances that appear as things such as a tree trunk, earth, stone, buildings, and household goods may be pounded, broken, and ground up. By grinding them down to particles, they are reduced to powder. By pulverizing

those particles to one-seventh their size, they are reduced to minute particles; and by disintegrating them to one-seventh their size, they are reduced so that they become partless. They are obliterated and vanish into the nature of space.

Moreover, the ashes of any substance that has been burned in fire naturally disappear into space, and something that appears to be the form of a living being vanishes altogether once it has been killed and burned up. By examining and analyzing all such appearing phenomena in that manner, you find that they all vanish completely, [65] and not a single thing is established in true existence. Intensive inquiry into that topic is essential, so know this!"

Prasannatindra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, if they are not established and are unreal in that manner, whence do all phenomena arise and appear? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Prasannatindra, with self-grasping acting as the cause and conceptualization acting as the contributing condition, they exist as mere appearances. The initial consciousness moves to the object, suddenly arousing an appearance. Due to the thought to eliminate it and the appearance of thinking it will be destroyed, it shifts or vanishes altogether. All phenomena are nothing more than mere appearances from dependently related events. There is certainly

nothing whatever that is truly existent from its own side.

For example, due to the simultaneous assembly of someone else's eyes as the cause, with limpid, clear space serving as the basis, and with the substances and mantras used for an illusion and the emanating mind as the contributing conditions, the dependently related event of an illusory emanation appears even though it is nonexistent. Due to the assembled, dependently related events of limpid, clear space as the cause, [66] and warmth and moisture as the contributing conditions, a mirage appears that is not established. From the dependent relationship of the limpid, clear, total-ground consciousness as the

cause and self-grasping as the contributing condition, dream appearances arise that are nonexistent; and one is deluded by grasping onto their reality and clinging to their true existence as if they were appearances in the waking state. Due to the dependent relationship of the simultaneous proximity of a limpid, clear mirror as the cause and someone's face as the contributing condition, a reflection appears that is nonexistent. Due to the dependent relationship of the samadhi of the cultivation of meditative stabilization as the cause and due to the simultaneous proximity of a vessel and moisture as the contributing condition, a city of gandharvas appears as an object. Due to the dependent relationship of a solid, high object such as a boulder and audial consciousness as the cause and making a noise such as shouting as the contributing condition, an echo occurs. Due to the dependent relationship of limpid, clear water as the cause and the simultaneous arising of planets and stars in the sky as the contributing condition, reflections appear. Due to the dependent relationship of water itself as the cause and stirring or agitation as the simultaneous, contributing condition, bubbles emerge. Due to the dependent relationship of the eyes as the cause and simultaneous pressure applied to the eye- channels as the contributing condition, an optical illusion takes place. Due to the dependent relationship of mastery in emanating as the cause and [67] entrance into the samadhi of producing emanations as the contributing condition, nonexistent emanations appear.

Thus, for those ten analogies there is dependence due to reliance

upon causes, there is a relationship due to the nonduality of the causes and the contributing conditions, and there is origination due to the emergence of nonexistent appearances. In a similar fashion, there arises a continuum of consciousness of self-grasping onto the "I" with respect to the unobstructed, nonobjective displays of the groundless, rootless domain of space, which is the fundamental, absolute nature of the pervasive realm of space. Due to that

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stream of consciousness, the ground is fragmented: by retracting the self, the fundamental, absolute nature is externalized. From the limpid, clear, mirror-like ground, in which anything can arise, the appearances of the three realms spring forth. As analogies, due to the emergence of foam that is nondual with the ocean, the ocean is set apart; and due to the appearance of rainbows in the sky, which are none other than the sky, the sky appears as something else. There is dependence due to reliance upon the I, there is a relationship due to the nonduality of self and other, and there is origination due to events that have no objective existence. Thus, by investigating the mode of existence of all kinds of appearing phenomena, recognize the crucial point of ascertaining them as displays of the empty space of reality-itself. [68]

Moreover, when you fall asleep, the inanimate world of appearing objects during the waking state, the sentient beings who inhabit the world, and all the appearing objects of the five senses dissolve into the vacuous total-ground, which is of the nature of space; and then they emerge from that domain. Once again self-grasping consciousness is aroused due to the apparitions of the movements of karmic energies. Consequently, due to self-appearances, everything inside and outside, including the inanimate and animate world and sensory objects, emerges as dream appearances, like before, in the fundamental, absolute nature. Joy, sorrow, and indifference are closely held and clung to as being truly existent. This is delusion, so recognize it!"

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The Questions of Samantabhasavyuhendra

Then Bodhisattva Samantabhasavyuhendra rose from his seat,

bowed reverently, and commented to the Bhagavan, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, I do not accept that all appearances dissolve in that way. When I get into bed, wrap myself in warm bedding, and fall asleep, this array of appearances is left behind."

He asked, "O Samantabhasavyuhendra, when you get into bed, wrap yourself in warm bedding, and fall asleep, if all waking appearances of the inanimate world, its inhabitants, and all sensory objects are left behind, [69] where is the enormous inanimate world that objectively appears in the dream state, where are the many sentient beings who inhabit it, and where are the arrays of appearances to the five senses? Tell me: are those emergent objects outside or inside?"

Samantabhasavyuhendra replied, "I believe they emerge inside the body."

He replied, "O Abhasavajra, take into consideration all the regions of the body from the interior of the head on down. Tell me: where do those enormous and numerous appearing phenomena, including many mountains and valleys, emerge?"

Abhasendra replied, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, when this is examined and analyzed in that way, the head is not large enough to hold such appearances of the animate and inanimate world, nor are the limbs or the torso. I wonder whether consciousness comes out of the body and sees another domain.

He replied, "O Abhasendra, if your awareness and material body are separated like that, and consciousness comes outside, from what orifice does it emerge? [70] And when it returns into the body, by what orifice does it enter? Identify this! What is the location of objects in a dream, and are they present in the cardinal directions, the intermediate directions, above or below? Tell me: do

you think the objects that appear in a dream, including the animate and inanimate world, are the same as those of appearances in the waking state, or are they are different?"

The Bodhisattva replied, "I see no such orifice, nor can I identify their being in the east, south, west, or north. I think they are in some

other domain."

He continued, "Consider the possibility that [consciousness] passes through an opening. In waking appearances there appear to be doors that allow one to pass in and out of a house, and they can be identified. If it is determined that [consciousness] goes to some direction in this domain, then all the elements and the animate and inanimate world [of the dream-state] would be of the same taste as waking appearances; so they would not be dream appearances. If it were possible for awareness to re-enter the material body after it has been separated from it, there would be no reason why all dead sentient beings couldn't re-enter their own bodies. In the case of a body at night, if the material body does not lose its warmth and become a corpse due to the separation of awareness from matter, there would be no reason why it should lose its warmth at death either.

Therefore, if you believe that daytime appearances and nighttime appearances are the same, are they differentiated by sleep or not? If you believe they are different, is one superimposed upon the other, [71] or does one take place inside and the other outside? Whatever you believe, tell me!"

He replied, "Teacher, Bhagavan, due to examining and analyzing in that way, I conclude that if [consciousness] were to go elsewhere, the body would become a corpse; and all appearances of the animate and inanimate world would have to be the same. So there would not be any differentiation due to sleep, and at the time of death there would have to be some means of re-entering the body. If daytime appearances and nighttime appearances were different, one of those appearances would have to be superimposed upon the other. If they were the

same, there would be no distinction between waking appearances and dream appearances. Thus, dream appearances emerge after waking appearances have disappeared into the absolute nature."

Again Samantabhasavyuhendra addressed the Bhagavan, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, for this body to exist, it must be dependent upon the causes and contributing conditions of one's parents. This raises

the objection that appearances do not transform [in the above manner]. So why do these parents appear? Why does this body appear? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, if both parents are necessary for the existence of a body, in the cases of a body in the intermediate state, [72] a dream-body, one that is born from heat and moisture, and one that is born spontaneously, a body appears but there is no mother or father. If you believe this body exists in dependence upon one's parents, before sentient beings became embodied, whence arose the original father? Where did he dwell? Where did he finally go? Examine in the same way the manner in which the [first] mother arose, lived, and departed. Investigate the progression of parents up to this present body. Comprehend this!"

Abhasendra responded, "Teacher, Bhagavan, all right. As a result of establishing appearances, I suspect that the appearance of myself alone is a mere appearance and does not exist. Is that so or not? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O great being, do not think in that way! If as a result of your establishment of all appearances, your perception of everything as empty finally leads you to the conclusion that nothing is empty except the mere nonexistent appearance of yourself alone, you have conflated that which is not empty with that which is empty. And that is merely conditioning yourself to view that which is existent as being nonexistent. Regarding emptiness as conventional, [73] then grasping onto existence as ultimate, if you believe that you alone do not exist

from your own side, that understanding of the emptiness of yourself alone leaves you with the Sravaka view of mere personal identitylessness. Establishing the entire phenomenal world as being like the ten illusory analogies, know that there are no appearing objects apart from the illusionist. From the very time they appear, know that they vanish for the person to whom they appear, and they are not truly existent. Know that as ultimate emptiness."

Abhasendra replied, "This is what I think: they are not the appearances of one sentient being. If all the three realms were

merely my own appearances, when the appearances of myself alone changed, all the appearances of the three realms would change accordingly; and they would certainly have to die, to vanish, and to get tired. Since that is not so, I do not think that due to my perception of external objects, the entire animate and inanimate world of the three realms perishes and vanishes together with myself. Thus, may the Teacher truly explain the meaning of this."

He responded, "O Abhasendra, [74] such thoughts of yours are familiar to all sentient beings, who are deluded by grasping onto true existence. Knowing how others behave does not constitute realization of emptiness. For beginningless lifetimes, you have apprehended your own appearances as being something else; and holding onto them, you become deluded. The phenomenal world and all the sensory objects in a dream are not left behind and cast away from the time that you awake. Rather, they all vanish into the realm of the mind. Likewise, all appearances vanish into yourself. You must ascertain that no substantial animate or inanimate world or sense objects exist out there. Holding that just for yourself there are no sentient beings or appearances apart from yourself and then mistakenly taking appearances to be truly existent is sentient beings' path of delusion. So observe that tendency in your mind! When the teachings of the Buddha degenerate, blind sentient beings establish

emptiness and merely come to the conclusion that although the animate and inanimate universe does not exist from one's own perspective, it does exist substantially from its own side. There are very few who identify the ultimate path of emptiness, [75] so carefully examine the nature of this crucial point."

Again Abhasendra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, if someone ascertains emptiness on the basis of such nonexistence, doesn't that person's experience of joy and sorrow and movement from one place to another within the three realms of the universe exist? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, for beginningless lifetimes this great sentient being has never revolved within the cycle of existence of the three realms. Although he may have traveled widely from one region

to another, they do not exist. His eyes do not see the slightest trace of form. His ears have never heard even the sound of an echo, nor has his nose smelled odors, his tongue experienced tastes, or his body felt tactile sensations. He has never taken even a single step in the three realms of the cycle of existence. He has never exerted the slightest bit of effort towards making a living. He does not sit or rise, nor does he ever move with any of his limbs. Know with certainty that he has never been subject to the experiences of birth, youth, adulthood, old age, illness, death, and so forth." [76]

Again Abhasendra asked, "O Teacher , Bhagavan, this beginningless and endless delusion is certain, and it is also certain that there is much wandering in the cycle of existence. But countries are seen with the eyes; sounds and voices are heard with the ears; various odors are sensed with the nose; and things that are experienced as tactile objects are seen with the eyes. Ultimately, things are taken in hand, eaten and tasted. All gentle and rough tactile sensations are experienced with the body. We do move around on the ground with our legs, and the appearances of birth, aging, sickness, and death are obvious. And

people do try to make a living by moving about and exerting themselves. Why do you teach that this does not exist? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, you do not travel from a region in a dream to a region in the waking state; rather, the appearances simply shift, so to speak. Although you may see a country in a dream, upon looking for it today, not even an iota of it is to be seen. While a variety of sounds and voices, smells, tastes, and different sorts of tactile sensations may appear, if they are checked out today, the ears hear their own sounds, the nose detects its own smells, the tongue experiences its own tastes. Other than that, [77] you have never eaten a single piece of food.

Although you may dream of traveling around a country on foot, not a single step was taken. Although you may exert yourself in various ways to make a living in a dream, check this out today, and you will see that nothing was done for even an instant. Likewise, all the

appearances of birth, aging, sick, death, walking, sitting, and movement are nonexistent. From the very moment that those delusive appearances simply arise, they are nonobjective, nonabiding, and baseless; they did not occur nor did they arise. Observe this! Like those examples, all appearances are mere appearances, empty, and not established in reality."

Abhasendra replied, "Dreams and appearances in the waking state are dissimilar. Dreams seem to be delusive appearances, whereas waking appearances seem to be truly existent, stable and incapable of being modified by the mind. So how is that? May the Teacher explain!"

He responded, "O Abhasendra, since this body of yours first appeared and was brought to mind, there have been all manner of waking appearances of working, finding employment, acquiring things, striving, and perceiving sensory objects. Where are they all now? What aims and tasks have been accomplished?

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[78] Recognize what is there that is truly existent! Likewise, examine the ways in which they are and are not comparable to dream appearances. See whether or not there are differences between those two in terms of their duration and quantity.

There is no way to distinguish between samsara and nirvana apart from the presence and absence of delusion. If you take dreams to be delusive and untrue, and waking appearances to be nondelusive and true, do you think you are an undeluded buddha during the daytime and a deluded sentient being while dreaming? If so, samsara and nirvana would trade places in a single day, so there would certainly be no hope for either of them. On the other hand, if you think they are both deluded, but there is truth and falsity within that delusion, there would be no reason for distinguishing them as delusive appearances.

Delusive appearances are so called because something that is not so is taken to be so. In your dreams do you think, 'This is a dream, and this is delusive,' making no distinction between truth and falsity?' Is there no hatred for your enemies, attachment to your friends, hope for the good, or fear of the bad? On the contrary, if you cling and grasp onto the reality of the good and bad, joy and sorrow, and all sensory objects during the waking state, [79] and you do the same with respect to dream appearances, as if they were waking appearances, then you are deceiving yourself. Presented with misleading appearances and mental states, you cling onto their reality and deceive yourself. Examine the way that happens!

O Abhasendra, due to the power of conceptualization there arise appearances of going in all directions; and due merely to the appearances of taking one step after another, various types of appearances of form and so on emerge and simultaneously disappear into the absolute nature. As for mountains and valleys, homes, and all possessions, the former vanish as the

latter arise; but the latter do not arrive, leaving the former behind somewhere. Know that simply by opening and closing the eyes, all appearances dissolve into the absolute nature and subsequent ones emerge."

Abhasendra asked, "I think these appearing phenomena right here are none other than all people, earth, water, and mountains that were present in the past, and they appear to the openings of the sense faculties. I don't think the later ones emerged after the earlier ones had disappeared into the absolute nature. The presentations and nature of all appearing phenomena invariably seem to be of one taste. What is that nature? [80] May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, it is not so. Do you believe the rainbow that appeared in the sky earlier and the one that appears today are identical? Do you think the clouds, mist, thunder, rain, and wind that occurred in the sky previously are the same as such events today? Do you believe that your body and all sensory objects in a dream are identical to those during the waking state? If you believe that, examine where they all are when they are not appearing? There would not be the slightest distinction in terms of the form, shape, color, or nature of any of them. Do you believe the people and animals that appear in the waking state are identical with, and in no way different from, those in a dream? If you think they are the same, you should recognize the obvious signs that they are dissimilar. For instance, in the waking state people may appear to be ill, to be struck by weapons, and to perish; but that is not so in the dream-state. Although the land may be destroyed and the mountains crumble in some region, it is different [when dreaming.]

You are deluded by taking all nonexistent, not established, appearing phenomena [81] to be permanent. In reality they are unestablished, impermanent, and mutable; and from the very moment they appear, they are

empty and nonobjective. Knowledge of that state is the quintessence of all the tantras, oral transmissions, and practical instructions. So

know this!"

Abhasendra then commented, "So all phenomena appear while being nonexistent. If one ascertains that all appearing phenomena are primordially empty, there is no point in establishing that, for I think the emptiness of oneself is enough. How about that? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, the appearances and mental states of all sentient beings are identityless, nonobjective, and of the nature of emptiness. However, due to failing to recognize that, they wander endlessly in the three realms of the cycle of existence, clinging onto true existence. If you establish such nonexistence as the nature of emptiness, realize it as it is, and cause that state to become manifest, that is the supreme quintessence of the essential nature of meditation and the authentic path, and of the teachings, oral transmissions, and practical instructions of the perfect Buddha. So know this! [82] If that is not realized, emptiness is reduced to something ethically neutral, so it is of no benefit or harm. If the nature of emptiness is known, that is the great wisdom of realizing identitylessness; and that is the essential nature of all the grounds and paths."

Abhasendra then asked, "Even though all phenomena are really empty, the mere realization of this doesn't cause them to become nonexistent. So I wonder whether physical or verbal virtues might surpass that. May the Teacher explain the meaning of that."

He replied, "Don't think like that. Even if you spent your entire life practicing conventional virtues such as prostrations and circumambulations with your body and mere oral recitations with your mouth, how could liberation ever be achieved? Since you won't become liberated even by such mental virtues as meditating on a deity, cultivating meditative stabilization, and merely knowing

thoughts, why do you get frustrated thinking that liberation won't be attained simply by knowing emptiness? If you think that, you are obscured by a great darkness of stupidity and foolishness, and you are blind in terms of the eye of wisdom with which you investigate the mode of being of all phenomena."

Abhasendra asked, "Nowadays there are some people who engage in meditation [83] and strive in practice; and some masters who acquire knowledge by looking to the teachings, tantras, oral transmissions, and practical instructions of the Jina and by training; and they do not succeed in meditation or realization. One must know that by oneself. Finally identifying consciousness after experiencing many levels of happiness and adversity is said to be best. Is that the real meaning or not? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, the jinas have taught that all phenomena, from form up to omniscience, are emptiness; and they have taught the characteristics of all phenomena because contemplatives must know and realize them. The path of their followers accords with that, so its conformity with all the tantras, oral transmissions, and practical instructions is a crucial point of the utmost importance. For beginningless eons, sentient beings have failed to discover the path by themselves, and they have been deluded by clinging onto the experiences of a constant stream of joyful and painful appearances. If they still fail to conform to the teachings, tantras, oral transmissions, and practical instructions of the jinas, on their own they will not discover the grounds or paths of liberation. And due to the appearances [84] of pleasant and painful sensations, the attainment of the state of omniscience is as far-fetched as the horns of a hare. Know that your speech is very stupid and foolish, and your words are uncritical, naive, and ignorant."

Abhasendra then asked, "Even though I know that phenomena are empty due to their nonexistence, anxiety and fear do arise on such occasions as being

attacked by others, falling over a cliff, or being assaulted with water, fire, or weapons; and events such as pain, illness, loss, and regret do happen. So it seems to me they must exist. Please explain how those occur."

He replied, "O Abhasendra, in such cases when the attacker, you, the weapon, the object jabbed with a stick, or when water, fire or a cliff appears as a frightening object, sensations of suffering and pain certainly arise due to dualistic grasping. But actually there is no loss,

and they do not inflict harm. The fires of hell do not burn, pretas are not tormented by hunger or thirst, and asuras are not hacked with weapons of war. Likewise, in terms of appearances all miseries and pains merely appear, but in terms of emptiness they are not established in anything.

O son of good breeding, the primordial ground appears as space [85] and is then apprehended as something else. Once space appears as earth, earth is apprehended as being a real substance. Similarly, space variously appears as sensory objects such as water, fire, air, and sentient beings; and those appearances are taken to be real things. As an analogy, various reflections of the sun, moon, planets, stars, and so on appear in the ocean, but they have no existence apart from the ocean. Likewise, everything boils down to space itself."

Abhasendra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, in the nature of pristine space, the absolute nature of reality, is there any benefit due to virtue, harm inflicted by sin, or anything benefited by gods or harmed by demons and malevolent beings? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, where are all the virtues committed with the body, speech, and mind? Examine the region in which they have been stored and the manner in which they are gathered. All accumulated virtuous karma has become nothing, empty, nonobjective, and intangible. As not even one isestablished, [86] they are nothing but appearances of performing virtue."

Abhasendra then asked, "Are they of no benefit to the mind?"

He replied, "Examine where in the mind it might be of benefit: its outside, inside, front, back, and so forth. If neither that which benefits nor that which is benefited is established, there is certainly no benefit. Examine also the direction and location in which all accumulated vices have been assembled, and observe the manner in which they are located there. They have always been unestablished and nonabiding, so if you think they have afflicted your mind, investigate and analyze its exterior, interior, top, bottom, front, back, and so on. By so doing, you will conclude that they are empty , mere appearances; and consequently there is not the slightest bit of harm

inflicted by them."

Abhasendra responded, "Although there seems to be no benefit or harm, I still think they exist. Please reveal directly whether that is so."

He replied, "O Abhasendra, if you inspect the mind-streams of an old man who has devoted his whole life to physical and verbal virtues and of an old man who has spent his whole life engaging in vice and nonvirtue, you will find [87] they both want happiness and don't want suffering; they see themselves as gods and regard others as demons; they have such thoughts as hope for the good and fear of the bad; and all their desires are parallel, with neither better than the other. In the past as well, with these thoughts, behavior, and the direction of their desires, they have been endlessly deluded in the cycle of existence; and in the future they are bound to be deluded in the same way. So there is certainly no difference between them."

Abhasendra asked, "With respect to virtuous and sinful conduct, is there no ripening of karma? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O great being, whatever virtuous or sinful actions have been committed, a continuous stream of joyful and miserable appearances will occur until the ripening of each of them has run its course. Then with the exhaustion of

that karma, one participates in other actions and their consequences. Due to physical and verbal virtues, there is a mere accumulation of temporary merit, which perpetuates the cycle of existence. But know that they will definitely not lead to the attainment of eternal joy.

O Abhasendra, [88] in emptiness free of conceptual elaboration there is no benefit by altruistic gods. Look and you will see there are no fathers, mothers, causes, contributing conditions, origination, location, departure, form, shape, or color of so-called gods; and there is no region or direction in which the gods dwell in the east, south, west, north, above, below, or in any of the intermediate directions. As there is no place where they dwell or region in which they are based, they have no form that is seen with the eyes, no sounds heard

with the ears, no odors smelled with the nose, no tastes experienced with the tongue, and
no tactile sensations felt in the body .So how can they be of benefit?

If you investigate and analyze everywhere in your own home--outside, inside, in between--and in the front, back, top, bottom, exterior, and interior of your body, you will see they are not present and are not established anywhere. Look for gods everywhere in the mountains, orchards, and forests, right down to the level of particles. From the level of minute particles and partless particles on up, investigate the abodes of gods and that which dwells there. If gods were to exist, how could insubstantial gods be of benefit to one who is substantial? Examine how that which is empty has no ability to benefit that which is empty, and you will certainly discover that to be nonobjective.

Furthermore, [89] the investigation of malevolent demons is as follows: enemies are called demons, those objects of fear whom everyone takes to be malevolent. Whence do they first originate? Are they born from earth or from water, or do they arise from the air or space? Upon investigation, if you think there are some origins from which they emerge, reduce those things down to

their constituent particles. Check them out after reducing them down to minute particles and partless particles. No origins are found with such inquiry. If you think they arise from living beings, inspect and analyze them down to their elements, sense bases, flesh, blood, bone, and marrow, and you will see they have no objective existence.

If you still think the consciousness of deluded sentient beings turns into demons, seek out their location. By inspecting where they might dwell among the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, you will not find any place where they dwell. If you still think they exist, what kind of form, shape, color, and sense bases do those beings have? Examine whether or not there are any forms that appear in your field of vision, any sounds that appear to your ears, any odors that appear as olfactory objects, any tastes that appear as gustatory objects, or any tactile sensations that appear as tactile objects. By so doing, you

will see they have no objective existence. [90] Finally, the investigation of the locus of moving and the agent who moves reveals that the object and agent of moving are not established.

Furthermore, if so-called demons were to transcend the objects of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch, how could they harm one who is substantially existent? Aggressors are empty and nonobjective, and objects of aggression are empty and not established; so there is no way for harm to be inflicted upon that which is empty. If it were possible for empty consciousness to afflict something else, then the consciousnesses of all sentient beings would be devouring and destroying each other. Thus, demons are to be understood as not existing by their own characteristics.

Hence, even though demons are neither seen nor felt, if you think gods and demons are responsible for the various appearances of joys and miseries that occur to the body, speech, and mind, then when illness and suffering occur,

you should see the wounds from being struck with weapons by those demons; you should see the swelling and bruises from being beaten by them with sticks and stones; and if you are afflicted with an internal disease, you should be able to feel when they reach inside you with their hands. Check carefully to see if that is so. Happiness arises and is experienced in one's mind-stream due to different sorts of food, clothing, and sensory objects, and that [91] is not divine protection. Being pierced by a thorn in the upper or lower portion of the body, the pain of being hit with a spark, the experience of suffering due to the heat of the sun, and the suffering of experiencing cold due to air and wind are not due to attacks by demons. Likewise, when the fruits of bad karma ripen, all illness, poverty, assaults by enemies, separation from friends, difficulties, hunger, and thirst arise as miserable experiences due to the ripening of previous karma. It is crucial that you know with certainty that there is no objective existence of afflictions or objects of affliction due to other demons or malevolent beings.

In general, living creatures experience what they have brought upon themselves, like a spider that catches itself in its own web. Fear of

demons fabricated by old superstitions is like a bird frightened by the sound of its own wings, and like a deer terrified at the sound of its own footsteps. Know that there are no other demons.

Generally speaking, one's own appearances arise as demons: since the head appears as a god, a cap and so on are regarded as clean; and since the lower part of the body appears as demons, lower garments [92] are regarded as unclean. In particular, since the feet are taken to be real demons, if anything touches one's shoes, people mistakenly believe the pollution from that brings great harm to one's body, speech, and mind. When any foul substance such as mucus and spittle that flow from inside the body fall upon the ground, people think of them as being like demons and poison. Look how people with those

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attitudes take their own appearances to be demons and regard them as their enemies! Watch how people who wish to make offerings to the gods make sure that all the offerings are undisturbed for a long time, without anyone eating them or making use of them. Observe that if people wish to exorcise a pisaca, even if they bring many possessions with them, those things stay where they are, without anyone taking them. If people think demons are present in anything from a needle and thread up to a house or a weapon, and if they engage in such acts as killing, beating, or pulverizing, why are the demons not killed and destroyed? There are many people who get rid of clothing, ornaments, tents, and houses that they have made, built, or erected themselves [93] if they think demons are present in those images. If you examine and analyze that situation, you will see it is like a skunk thinking it smells its own odor in its hole and then abandoning that hole. Know for yourself the fallacy of people fabricating demons out of their own superstitions.

Abhasendra asked, "Why is it necessary to so investigate the benefit and harm brought about by virtue and vice and by gods and demons? May the Bhagavan explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, these are the reasons for so determining the absence of benefit or harm due to virtue and vice. Emptiness is the path for achieving the states of liberation and omniscience, but

when foolish people who are attracted to fascinating experiences meditate on profound emptiness, no fascinating experiences come to mind; so they lose their belief and trust. Worrying that they may be in danger of wasting their lives by not striving or creating anything in their minds, they apply themselves assiduously to such practices as prostrations, circumambulations, offerings, and oral recitations. [94] Again, due to having the exceptional benefits of this meditation explained to them, they may think it would be good to try it. Then, although they meditate a

little bit, they understand and experience nothing; so they once again apply themselves to methods for purifying obscurations and accumulating merit.

Your goal is not accomplished with a vacillating mind, so even if you strive sporadically like that for a long time, finally you will not escape dying an ordinary death. Therefore, if you do not know how to distinguish between what is and what is not Dharma, even if you say you have been introduced to meditation, the view will remain hidden, and you will have no belief in the ultimate Dharma. Due to the power of mental activity, all virtues and vices merely produce the experiential appearances of various joys and sorrows. But all virtuous and sinful karmas have no form and no substance, and they are totally not established and nonexistent. Knowledge of that brings about belief in meditation, and it leads to the conviction that the ground of all virtue and vice is emptiness. You are obscured by not being aware of your own essential nature. Due to not knowing and not realizing the ground of great emptiness as the display of the whole of samsara and nirvana, you wander in the cycle of existence. Know that merely engaging in physical and verbal virtues does not purify that obscuration, [95] and believe and trust in your own awareness. By so doing, the dust will be removed from your eye of wisdom.

If you examine and recognize the benefit and harm due to those gods and demons, you will see that from the mere establishment of the aggregates grasped as the I, there comes a constant stream of appearances of the six classes of sentient beings. Thus, mental grasping and engagements involving meditation, views, intentional

objects, integration, and inner withdrawal constantly manifest externally as apparitions of gods and demons, internally as physical illnesses, and secretly as various experiences of joys and sorrows. Falling under the sway of the superstition of taking them to be demons, and

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clinging onto that, people turn away from the true path and go astray. Therefore, it is crucial to determine this.

Moreover, once you enter into the instructions on Severance and practice them, you establish this fact that gods and demons are none other than your own appearances. Recognizing the fact that there are no gods and no demons is the teaching and the main practice of Severance, so this is supremely important. In the meditation on deities in the stage of generation as well, if you take the gods and demons to be substantial, [96] you go astray on a path of delusion. So in that context, too, that is exceedingly important. Furthermore, whatever spiritual vehicle you may enter, if you fail to recognize these points, and mistakenly take gods and demons and virtue and vice to exist objectively by their own characteristics, you will certainly fall into delusion. So ascertain this as the quintessence of practical guidance and as the essential nature of the path.

Thus, if you do not recognize how gods and demons are nonexistent, when you dream of a monk, you may take him to be a parthiva; when you dream of a woman, you may take her to be a demoness; when you dream of a child, you may take it to be a theurang; and when you dream of a tadpole, you may take it to be a naga or a nyan. All those are just delusive appearances that are not established in truth. And if you dream of acquiring such things as food, livestock, and a house, the next morning they have vanished out of sight; so they are untrue and intrinsically empty.

When people go from village to village devoting themselves to religious rituals and subjugating demons in hopes of acquiring material gain, even though they try to trick others with various techniques for slaying and subjugating demons, anxiety and terror of demons arise constantly. Hope in gods arises in the same way, and one's superstitions manifest as one's enemies. Thus, illnesses and

various joys and sorrows may also constantly occur like that. [97]

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Therefore, if you know this way in which gods and demons are nonexistent, this is exceptionally deep, practical guidance for Severance superstition.

If the importance of this is not recognized, you may take even the acquisition of a needle and thread to be due to divine intervention and propitiate the gods. And if your hand or foot is pricked with a thorn, you may attribute that to a pisaca. Then, with the activation of your superstitions, whatever misfortune occurs, it will seem that it was brought about by demons; and your mind will be filled with anxiety . Demons are conjured up by ideas about demons, which turn into devils for life. So the practical instructions on Severance are extraordinarily profound for turning away from this false path."

Abhasendra then asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, with respect to the whole of samsara and nirvana, are the objects of hope and fear established in their own characteristics or not? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, the objects of hope called buddhas are originally unestablished and unpresent. If a buddha had a body, would it have been produced by the causes and contributing conditions of parents? If so, a buddha would fall into the extreme of birth. If a buddha had a pure realm, sensory objects, and a retinue, [98] would they appear due to grasping onto the phenomenal identities of apprehended objects? If a buddha appeared to have a body, would that occur due to grasping onto a personal identity? If you believe buddhas finally pass away into nirvana, do you assert that they fall into the extreme of death and cessation? If you believe buddhas remain in the meantime, you are falling into the extreme of substantialism. If you think buddhas reveal the Dharma to many sentient beings, those things that are apprehended, appear, and arise as the individuals who reveal the Dharma, as the Dharma that is revealed, and as the disciples who are taught are all astonishing delusions of

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dualistic grasping. If you believe buddhas exist like that, you are deluded by the foggy misconception of regarding buddhas as sentient beings.

Do not think a buddha has eyes. If you were to think that, he would have to have visual consciousness, inevitably implying the presence of appearances as form. If that were so, there would have to be objects apprehended by the eyes and subtle thoughts of taking their configurations to be good, bad, and neutral. That visual apprehension would be called mind. [99]

Do not think a buddha has ears. If you think so, apprehended objects and the subtle conceptualization of grasping onto solids would appear simultaneously with audial consciousness and the appearances of sound; and that would be grasping. Do not think a buddha has a nose. If you think so, apprehended objects and the subtle conceptualization of grasping onto odors would appear with olfactory consciousness and the appearances of odors; and that would be grasping. Do not think a buddha has a tongue. If you think so, gustatory consciousness and the appearances of tastes are apprehended objects and the conceptualization of holding fast to them is called the grasping mind. Do not think a buddha has a body. If you think so, he would have to have bodily consciousness and tactile sensations. Just as the presence of water naturally implies moisture and the presence of fire implies heat, the five doors of the senses are mirrors of delusion.

Thus, all consciousnesses, appearances, and grasping minds occur spontaneously as dependently related events. The subtle thoughts holding fast to tactile objects [100] are tactile grasping, and the three realms of the cycle of existence are brought into being due to dualistic minds. As for the five senses, the aspects of limpidity and clarity of the mind unceasingly emerge as minds and appearances, and they are given different labels. The six collections of consciousness are called the mind. Those who have a mind are called sentient

beings, just as creatures having horns are called horned creatures. Recognize how important it is not to confuse buddhas with sentient

beings in that way.

If you still think buddhas are substantial like sentient beings, seek out the initial origins of the buddhas and examine where they dwell in the meantime: in the east, south, west, north, or in some intermediate direction? If you think they dwell above, and if a world called a buddha- field exists in the sky without anything to support it, it should fall to the ground. If it were present on earth, there would be no reason why you couldn't go to there now and reach it. If it were underground, it would be revealed by digging for it. But then when you die, why would you be able to come to places that can't be seen or felt now?

If you suggest that it is not a place that can be reached by corporeal beings, do you believe that the consciousnesses of all sentient beings who have died must have arrived at that place? Is it not a place that can be experienced by those with bad karma? If all those who go from one place to another and all the places they go [101] arise and occur due to dualistic, deluded minds, then there is no bad karma other than dualistic grasping. Nevertheless, they are certainly experienced by everyone.

Moreover, if such places were to exist, sentient beings bound by the two types of self-grasping and endowed with the five senses, and six collections of consciousness might go to those places. But due to the impurity of their mind streams, they could experience only the fruition of temporary pleasure, without reaching a state of eternal joy. This becomes obvious by observing the unstable, transitory nature of dualistic appearances. The qualities of emergence and cessation have never existed in the nature of the appearances of the dualistic mind. So this indicates their own falsity.

Some people say that an animate and inanimate environment exists in the buddha-fields, that a plenitude of joy and prosperity is naturally present there,

and that whole world, with its Teacher and retinue, has the extraordinarily fine qualities of serenity, coolness, limpidity, and freedom from impurity. If so, they are no better than the gods of the form realm, so those are appearances of sentient beings' minds. The

various appearances of that world are apparitions of ignorance, which shows that this is a limitation of sentient beings." [102]4

Abhasendra then asked, "There appear to be many deeds, writings, temples, and reliquaries of numerous contemplatives and siddhas of the past. How is that?" May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, when someone falls asleep and is dreaming, he may hear many accounts of the early formation of the cosmos and the evolution of human and nonhuman life forms. He may witness many teachers and masters propounding the Dharma, see the images of numerous temples and reliquaries, and observe an abundance of writings. Many will appear to report that the images of those temples and reliquaries were constructed by certain patrons, artists, and smiths, and that those writings were composed by specific teachers. However, when he wakes up the next moment, it turns out that all those perceived appearances and reports were nothing but his own appearances emerging from and disappearing back into his own nature.

Likewise, all the representations of the body, speech, and mind of the buddhas that appear in this way emerge as appearances of this morning and this present moment. But they did not exist earlier nor is there any dependence upon anything prior. Ascertain them all to be delusive self- appearances. Buddha [103] is just this ground of all sentient beings-emptiness free of conceptual elaboration.

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4 The above discussion of the buddhas and buddha-fields is not meant to suggest that they are utterly nonexistent. Rather, those phenomena as sentient beings conceive of them do not exist objectively, independently of conceptual designation.

That which is called a vision of buddha is Buddha gazing upon sentient beings, and that is simply a delusive, muddled, experiential vision; for the observer and the object that is seen do not exist; they are nothing more than intangible displays of emptiness. Buddha is no more than a self- appearance; so without placing your hopes in

any other object, empty out the object of your hopes!

Now by examining and analyzing the fundamental ground of the domains of the impure cycle of existence, you must realize that frightening regions do not exist apart from yourself. Here is the situation. First of all, once you have cast off this body, if you were to wander to a region called the intermediate state, investigate: does that exist to the east, south, west, or north of this spot, or is it right here or in some intermediate direction and so forth? By so doing, you will see it is not established. If your previous body has been discarded, check out the parents, origins, location, and demise of the body in the intermediate state. They should have real characteristics and be truly existent, but you will recognize the visions of the intermediate state arise as mere appearances of a dream-body and dream-environment. And the body, environment, and all sensory objects that appear in this life will be ascertained as mere transitory appearances without any real characteristics or true existence. [104]

Do all the hell realms, together with their inhabitants, exist underground or aboveground? Check out where those worlds exist where you are and to the east, south, west, and north. Who built the floors of molten iron? Whence was the firewood gathered? Who forged the weapons of hell? From what parents, causes, and conditions did the workers in hell originate? If their torsos, legs, and arms are not burned by fire, why are other sentient beings burned? Those workers inflict such horrible suffering on sentient beings, so where do they

experience the karmic consequences of their deeds? If you investigate this, you will recognize everything to be like a dream-world of delusive appearances. If merely wounding and beating sentient beings nowadays results in their death, why doesn't such suffering of hell kill them as well? If they were to go from one place to another, we should be able to experientially confirm the existence of those places now. But why is it that they are not seen except by the consciousness of the dead? If you investigate that matter, you will know they do not exist apart from your own appearances. [105]

Likewise, does the world of pretas with their unendurable suffering

definitely exist or not? If that realm substantially exists, check out its location in the cardinal and intermediate directions, above, below, and so on. If people nowadays can die as a result of starvation over a period of days or a few months, why doesn't death result from eons of suffering from hunger and thirst? If you consider that carefully, you will ascertain that although one has nothing to eat for beginningless and endless lifetimes, there is a sense of joy in anticipation of the appearance of food; and pretas experience a sense of starving, which arises as suffering. Likewise, by meticulously investigating all the places of origination, remaining, and departing of all the worlds of the six communities of sentient beings, you will profoundly comprehend that the appearances of the six classes of sentient beings emerge like dream appearances that occur when waking appearances are displaced; and those realms are not substantially existent.

Therefore, once this delusion of self-appearances has dissolved into the absolute nature, the realm of reality-itself, or suchness, becomes manifest. [1061 Be certain that effectively striving to realize this from the depths of your own being is the very nature of the simultaneous perfection of the path, fruition, and essence of omniscient, perfect spiritual Awakening.

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Now reality-itself, the sugatagarbha, consists of the basis of emergence and essential nature of all phenomenal appearances, and it is emptiness. If there is no essential nature to form, form does not appear; and if there is no essential nature to sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental objects, none of them will appear. If there is no essential nature to space, no appearances will arise in space; and if earth, water, fire, air, and all sentient beings have no essential nature, ground, or root--if such are absent--they will not appear. Thus, the essential nature of space is emptiness; and the essential nature of earth, water, fire, air, form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and all mental objects is emptiness. Likewise, ascertain that the ground of everything is nothing more than emptiness, and emptiness is the essential nature.

The essential nature of all the reflections of planets and stars in the ocean is the ocean itself; [107] the essential nature of the entire

universe is space; the essential nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana is none other than the mind-itself, the sugatagarbha. That which is called the sugatagarbha is nowhere else. By counteracting the clinging onto space itself as being something else, by determining with discerning wisdom that samsara and nirvana are of the nature of the space of emptiness, and by experiencing the wisdom of realizing identitylessness, you will ascertain the ground as being space itself.

If you understand that as an emptiness of materiality, as something ethically neutral without faults or virtues, know that it is not like that. When sentient beings are deluded, that is the essential nature of the elements, sensory objects, and the entire universe--they are all displays of space. Although the essential nature of the ground is the nature of space, the ground is obscured by ignorance and is thus taken to be substantially existent. As a consequence of the identityless nature of pervasive space being apprehended as the self, it appears

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as the self. In the process of the ground being apprehended as something external, space appears as an emptiness of materiality.

Due to the limpid, clear aspect of space, space appears as earth, fire, water, [1081 air, form, sound, smell, taste, and as tactile objects. That is like the appearance of various reflections, the planets, and stars due to the limpid and clear aspect of the ocean. All the reflections, planets, and stars are none other than the ocean itself, of which they are of the same taste. Likewise, the whole of samsara and nirvana is none other than space itself, of which they are of the same taste. Recognizing and ascertaining all of samsara and nirvana as displays of space is called the is called the wisdom of pristine space. The manifestation of space is called the primordial wisdom of awareness.5

Abhasendra then asked, "To what does the term awareness refer? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, due to the power of ignorance on the part of all sentient beings throughout the three realms, the mode of being of one's own pristine space does not manifest. That is

called ignorance. Space manifests by establishing with discerning wisdom all phenomena of samsara and nirvana, they are ascertained as nothing, empty, intangible, nonobjective, and as displays of space. That is the great, infinite ground-awareness." [109]

Abhasendra then asked, "Isn't that which is manifest a result of the physical eyes? That is not true of awareness, so is there or is there not an inner knower? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "The eyeballs do not see waking appearances, dream appearances, or appearances following this life. Even a trillion eyeballs would not make form become manifest. All daytime appearances, nighttime

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5The above passage does not equate space with emptiness, but rather uses space as a metaphor for the ultimate ground of existence. Space itself is within the domain of the intellect and is a conventional reality, but its characteristics are analogous to those of emptiness, so this metaphor is used to bring disciples closer to a realization of the nature of reality-itself.

appearances, and appearances during and following this life are due solely to the minds of sentient beings, which are clear light in nature, primordially present, unceasing, limpid, clear consciousness, free of contamination, and which can make anything appear. It is like this: the stream of consciousness that establishes, ascertains, and perceives samsara and nirvana. as great emptiness is called the wisdom that realizes identitylessness. That is of the nature of the primordial wisdom that comprehends the essence of the great, infinite ground-awareness,6 the most sublime of all phenomena. [110]

These are its qualities: son of good breeding, just as all darkness is utterly dispelled with the rising of the sun, simply by establishing the nature of this, the wisdom that realizes identitylessness utterly dispels all the darkness of the ignorance of self-concepts; and the nature of being of reality-itself, or suchness, is made manifest. Just as the explosion of the great conflagration at the end of the eon

disintegrates all gross substances and utterly annihilates even the tiniest insects, leaving not even a trace of ash, so does the wisdom that realizes identitylessness overwhelm all recognized vices and utterly extinguish all unrecognized vices and obscurations.

Great wisdom is like an eye that sees, for it makes manifest all the phenomena of the path and fruition. Great wisdom is like the water of a great ocean, for just as all rivers and streams originate from the ocean and return to it, so do all the phenomena of the path and fruition originate from it and return to it. Great wisdom is like space, for just as there is nothing in the world that is not within its domain, in the very instant that all the phenomena included in samsara and nirvana are perceived with great wisdom, they are encompassed within it. [111]

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6 When one realizes the essential nature of the ground-consciousness, one ascertains it to be the ground-awareness referred to in this passage.

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In one moment sentient beings may be like slaves of Mara, mounds of mental afflictions, and sacks of poison; and such blind, sinful beings are not objects of anyone's devotion. But if they identify great wisdom and manifest it, in that moment they are worthy of homage, devotion, and worship of multitudes of beings, including the gods; and they become fields for accumulating merit.

Great wisdom is free of all the harshness of mental afflictions, so it is gentle. Its precious, spontaneous, melodious speech is known to bear the sixty attributes of the voice of Brahma, so it is melodious.7 It sees the equality of samsara and nirvana, so it is an eye. It is none other than the absolute nature that pervades the essence of everything, so it is constant. It uniquely perceives all phenomena of the ground, path, and fruition as primordial wisdom, so it sees.8 It releases self-concepts into the absolute nature, so it is power. It is the source of all might and power, so it is great. It has attained the great confidence of fearlessness, so it is accomplished.9 As soon as great wisdom manifests, [112] one transcends mundane existence, so it is noble. It synthesizes all the

types of circles of ornaments of the inexhaustible three mysteries, so it is of three types. It is the protector of all beings of the three realms, so it is a protector.10 All of those are none other than great wisdom.

Great wisdom naturally quells all dualistic grasping onto the appearances of phenomena into the suchness of reality-itself, so it is presented in peaceful forms. Snuffing out the life of samsara, and mercilessly bringing one to the state of nirvana, it is merely said to take on wrathful forms. As soon as this great

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7 The Tibetan terms for gentle and melodious (or voice) are 'Jam dbyangs, meaning Manjughosa.
8 The Tibetan terms for eye, constant, and sees are sPyan ras gzigs, meaning Avalokitesvara.
9 The Tibetan terms, for power, great, and accomplished are mThu chen thob, Mahasthamaprapta, an epithet of Vajrapani.
10 The Tibetan terms, for noble, three types, and protector are 'Phags pa rigs gsum mgon po, or Nobles of the Three Types, referring to Manjusri, Avalokitesvara, and Vajrapani.

wisdom that realizes identitylessness manifests, it transforms all mental afflictions into displays of primordial wisdom.

The firm, resistant delusion of not being aware of one's own essential nature is called delusion. With the manifestation of the wisdom that realizes identitylessness, the whole of samsara and nirvana naturally dissolves into displays of the clear light of reality-itself; so it is the vajra of delusion. In the realm of the limpid, clear, absolute nature of the ground, free of contamination, the hatred pertaining to dualistic appearances is naturally vanquished, so it is the vajra of hatred. In the realm of the great, pure equality of samsara and nirvana the pride of self-concepts is naturally vanquished, so it is the vajra of pride. Once the vital energies and mind [113] have dissolved into the absolute nature of emptiness, the attachment and craving that arouse thoughts are naturally vanquished, so it is the vajra of attachment. Due to the sense of the self dissolving into unreality, jealousy entailing grasping onto signs

is naturally vanquished, so it is the vajra of jealousy. Since the mental afflictions vanquish themselves, it is presented in wrathful forms. This great wisdom which is replete with all such qualities makes manifest the primordial wisdom of the dharmakaya, which is present as the ground."

Abhasendra then commented, "OTeacher, Bhagavan, if there were present in oneself a buddha who has fundamentally never known or experienced delusion, whether one recognizes it or not, since it is a buddha, there should be no need to make wisdom or primordial wisdom evident to it. Moreover, there would be no reason why sentient beings should wander in the cycle of existence, having to experience joys and sorrows. May the Teacher explain this point!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, as a consequence of the ground being reduced to something ethically neutral, it is of no benefit or harm. Here is an analogy to illustrate the reduction of fundamental, eternal reality-itself to

something ethically neutral. Even if you have a wish-fulfilling gem with you your whole life, by failing to recognize it and mistaking it for an ordinary stone, you may be tormented by the miseries of poverty. [114] The gem has not become powerless, but failing to recognize it, you pay it no heed; and consequently no siddhis occur.

Never even for an instant have you been separated from the primordially pure ground, free of conceptual elaboration; but by failing to recognize it, you have not apprehended your own state for yourself. As a consequence, you have been deluded by grasping onto the true existence of the constant stream of joyful and painful appearances. Now great wisdom recognizes manifest, primordial wisdom; and by apprehending the profundity of your own state, you are self-liberated. That is like recognizing the gem and treating it with respect, which relieves you from poverty.

The presence of the ground as something ethically neutral is like an ownerless field. The independence that ensues from identifying your own essence for yourself is like sowing a crop in a field and enjoying the harvest. The ethically neutral ground is like an ownerless, empty castle, which is therefore of no benefit or harm.

The manifestation of the ground is like an owner making use of his castle. The ethically neutral ground is like the sky obscured by darkness. The manifestation of the ground is like the sun rising in the heavens. The ethically neutral ground is an object of delusion for sentient beings, so it is of no benefit or harm. [115] The manifestation of the ground is mastery over the grounds and paths of liberation. Thus, the manifestation of all the great qualities of the ground is due to the power of great wisdom."

Abhasendra asked, "Bhagavan, now are the dharmakaya, or awareness that is present as the ground, and path-awareness different or not? If they are, may the Teacher explain their essential nature and classifications, the manner in which

excellent qualities are perfected, the way sentient beings become deluded, and the nature of their being."

He replied, "O great being, there is both path-awareness and ground awareness. As for path-awareness: once you have identified in yourself primordially present, unceasing consciousness, you transcend all modes of grasping, involving analytical constructs, and disappear into your own natural state. By settling in meditative equipoise in that state, without the three types of modification, that [consciousness] is an expression of the luster of wisdom or primordial wisdom, even though it is not actually such wisdom itself. Finally, by remaining in such meditative equipoise, you see the truth of reality-itself, and ground-awareness becomes manifest.

As for awareness that is present as the ground: in terms of the labels, substances, origins, location, and departure of oneself and all appearances, objects of knowledge are established as being of the nature of ten types.11 [116] Having ascertained all the phenomena included within samsara and nirvana as being displays of self-appearances alone, the great, all-pervasive realm of pristine space, which is self-arisen, spontaneous, primordial wisdom, will become manifest.

Its qualities are these: by not confusing awareness for the mind, there is pure ethical discipline; by mastering awareness by leaving it as it is, without activity, there is pure generosity; by awareness

apprehending its own state in itself, there is pure patience; not transgressing the three types of non modification in meditative equipoise or the three relinquishments during the post-meditative state is pure zeal; 12 by transforming conceptualization into

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11 The ten types are the ten analogies indicating the illusory nature of all phenomena. They are: an illusion, a dream, a mirage, a reflection, a city of gandharvas, an echo, the moon in water, a bubble, an optical illusion, and a phantom.

12 In meditative equipoise the body, speech, and mind are not to be structured or modified in any way, and that natural state of those three is not to be relinquished during the post-meditative state either.

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primordial wisdom, there is pure meditative stabilization: by displaying samsara and nirvana in their equality, there is pure wisdom. That is the spontaneous presence in the essential nature of the six perfections.

By settling in meditative equipoise in great, naturally settled reality-itself, which is devoid of grasping, without activity, and primordially at great rest, there is pure meditative equipoise. As a result of one's view, meditation, and conduct not reverting to the ordinary state, the post-meditative state is pure; and the essential natures of nondual meditative equipoise and the post-meditative state are perfected simultaneously.

The contamination of ignorance is cleared out [117} in the absolute nature, and all the qualities of primordial wisdom naturally arise within the great primordial wisdom of awareness, where they expand as great spontaneity.13 All the phenomena included within samsara and nirvana are naturally present, without modification, in the nature of awareness itself; so that is reality-itself.14 All virtuous phenomena are desired, without differentiation, in the self-arisen, great primordial wisdom of awareness; so one speaks of the Sangha.15 The three kinds of external Jewels are included in one taste in the nature of awareness, reality-itself; and they are of the essential nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana; so they are supreme; and that is the mother who brings all beings to a state of eternal bliss.16 Due to the oath not to slip out of the state of one's own awareness, one speaks of the chosen deity.17 Because of being like a mother who is pregnant with samsara and nirvana in the expanse of space, one speaks of space;

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13 The above references to cleared out (Tib. sangs) and expand (Tib. rgyas) implicitly give an etymology of the Tibetan translation for Buddha, namely sangs rgyas

14 Reality-itself [Tib. chos nyid] in this context refers to the refuge

of the Dharma (Tib. chos).
15 The above references to virtuous (Tib. dge ba'i) and desired (Tib., 'dun) implicitly give an etymology of the Tibetan translation for Sangha, namely dge 'dun.
16 The above references to supreme (Tib. bla) and mother (Tib. ma) provide an etymology for the Tibetan term for guru, namely bla ma.
17 The above reference to oath (Tib. yid la dam bcas pa) provides an etymology for the Tibetan term for chosen deity, namely yi dam.

and because of moving through the many gateways of skillful means and dependent origination, one speaks of going.18 They are present in the essential nature of all the objects of refuge of the inner Secret Mantra.

The essential nature, great primordial emptiness, unborn primordial wisdom, is the dharmakaya. Unceasing primordial wisdom due to the naturally spontaneous, self-perfected enjoyment of the displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdom is the sambhogakaya. Great primordial wisdom of all pervasive compassion arises for the sake of sentient beings, so one speaks of the nirmanakaya.The secret, unsurpassed Three Jewels [118] are also completely present in the great primordial wisdom of awareness. Properly recognize the spontaneity in the essential nature of the synthesis of the Jewels; know that as the sublime protector of disciples; and devote yourself to that. Not being divorced from that state is the real taking of refuge in the nature of being. That is the supreme and foremost of all the ways of taking refuge.

As a means for the Cultivation of the Spirit, this is far superior to other paths: knowing one's own essential nature as the homogenous, pervasive nature of being of samsara and nirvana is manifestly the best of all cultivations of the spirit. In the expanse of awareness, reality-itself, free of conceptual elaboration, establish the unsought, self-arisen nature of all the circles of ornaments of the inexhaustible bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and activities of all the jinas and jinaputras of the three times. Ascertaining that and practicing it is the essential nature of the synthesis of all sadhanas and mandalas. That alone is this immutable accomplishment, so recognize it!

If awareness is oath-bound in its own nature, and if you achieve the confidence of not slipping away from that, you will effortlessly achieve the supreme siddhi in this lifetime. If you do slip away from that and fall into a state

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18 The above references to space (Tib. mkha') and going (Tib. 'gro) provide an etymology for the Tibetan term for dakiini, namely mkha' 'gro ma, which is abbreviated here to mkha' 'gro.

of ignorance, the sufferings of samsara and the miserable states of existence will scorch you like fire. [119] So this is the great samaya. Binding yourself to the realm of awareness, unconfused with respect to the avenues of deluded clinging to reality, is the essential nature of all vows.

For beginningless lifetimes, the veil of ignorance has obscured the displays of the originally pure, absolute nature of the ground. The manifestation of the face of infinite, sovereign awareness-reality-itself, which transcends causality-dispels that obscuration into nonobjective, great openness. So that is the purification of obscurations. However much you strive in contaminated virtue to benefit the mind with the body and speech, you are merely accumulating merit within the cycle of existence; but you will not achieve the state of liberation. Why? Fundamental ignorance is the foundation of samsara and all delusive appearances and mental states. Thus, none of the virtuous and nonvirtuous deeds based upon that foundation transcend the cycle of existence."

Abhasendra then asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, in that case, if the mind-itself has always been Buddha, untainted by faults or stains, please explain the whole of this delusive ground, path, and fruition."

He replied, "O Abhasendra, the pure ground [120] is Awakened as the originally pure19, primordial Protector. Its manifestation is the self-arisen buddha of awareness. These are its characteristics: its essential nature is primordial, great emptiness, the absolute nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana, the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality. Mirror-like primordial wisdom is of a

limpid, clear nature free of contamination, which allows for the unceasing appearances of all manner of objects. The primordial wisdom of equality is so called, for it equally pervades the nonobjective emptiness of the

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19 The Tibetan term ka dag also has this connotation: ka refers to the beginning of time, and dag implies the transcendence over the very concept of a beginning. Thus, this term implies a transcendence of time altogether.

whole of samsara and nirvana. The primordial wisdom of discernment is so called, for it is an unceasing avenue of illumination of the qualities of primordial wisdom. The primordial wisdom of accomplishment is so called, for all pure, free, simultaneously perfected deeds and activities are accomplished naturally of their own accord. The dharmakaya in which the five primordial wisdoms are simultaneously perfected is the natural luster of awareness that is present as the ground. It is known as primordial wisdom that dissolves into inward luminosity but is not obscured.

Ignorance of its nature is established as the cause of delusion. This is the way it operates: mere ignorance of the nature of the displays of the all-pervasive ground acts as the cause. As that becomes somewhat fortified, it is present as the genuine total-ground, which is immaterial like space, a blank, unthinking void. Arrival in that state corresponds to being comatose, being in meditative absorption, [121] arriving in a trance induced by meditative stabilization, being engulfed by deep sleep in the total-ground in which appearances have dissolved into the absolute nature, and arriving at the point of death, in which appearances have shifted. That is called the genuine, total-ground. Free of mental clinging to experience, one is engulfed in a ground that is empty of matter.

From that state arises limpid, clear consciousness itself as the basis of the emergence of appearances; and that is the total-ground consciousness. Moreover, no objects are established apart from its own clarity, and while it can give rise to all manner of appearances, it does not enter into any object. It is like the ability of planets and

stars to appear in limpid, clear water; like the ability of reflections to appear in a limpid, clear mirror; and like the animate and inanimate world appearing in limpid, clear space. In the same way, appearances can emerge in the empty, clear, total-ground consciousness.

From that state arises the consciousness of the mere appearance of the self called I. The self is apprehended as being over here, so the ground appears to be over there, thereby establishing the appearing object of immaterial space. As that becomes fortified, it is made manifest, and so-called mental cognition arises, which is the basis for the emergence of appearances; and the aspect of clarity is revealed. From that arise the five types of appearing objects; and by holding onto them, there is clinging and delusion. [122]

Thus, obscuring ignorance veils the natural potency of the ground, namely, self-arisen, inborn, primordial wisdom. As a result, its luster is forcefully transferred outside. This is how that occurs: with the obscuration of the primordial wisdom of accomplishment, its luster is transformed into subtle grasping; with the obscuration of the primordial wisdom of equality, its luster is transformed into afflicted mental cognition; and with the obscuration of the primordial wisdom of discernment, its luster is transformed into that which is called mental cognition.

This is how that luster is transformed from the five absolute natures into the five great elements and the five derivative elements: in the all-pervasive realm of the dharmakaya, the potency of the primordial wisdom of accomplishment is obscured. Consequently, due to the contributing condition of the movement of karmic energies, a great element occurs inwardly in the nature of the vital essence of the energies; and that primary cause is transformed into lustrous green light. As a consequence of grasping onto that as being real and clinging to it as truly existent, it becomes solid and fully developed; and it occurs externally as the derivative element appearing as air, in the nature of a residue.

Likewise, with the obscuration by ignorance of the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality , its luster appears as the

great element of deep blue colored light. As a consequence of grasping onto that as being real and clinging

onto it as truly existent, the derivative element of space appears. [123] With the obscuration by ignorance of mirror-like primordial wisdom, its luster appears as the great element of white light. As a consequence of grasping onto that as being real and clinging onto it as truly existent, it appears as the derivative element of water. With the obscuration by ignorance of the primordial wisdom of equality, its luster appears as the great element of yellow light. As a consequence of grasping onto that as being real and clinging onto it as truly existent, it appears as the derivative element of earth. With the obscuration by ignorance of the primordial wisdom of discernment, its luster appears as the great element of red light. As a consequence of grasping onto that as being real and clinging onto it as truly existent, it appears as the derivative element of fire. In that way, all the elements emerge and solidify from the five absolute natures. So know this!

The appearance of the formation of the cosmos from the five absolute natures is as follows: relatively speaking, in the realm of baseless space the mandala of air is formed as the underlying ground. Upon it forms a serene, clear, pure ocean, and upon that is the mighty, golden earth. The mandala of fire is said to be established in their makeup; and it is said that all sentient beings come into being as something like their essence and vapor. That is said simply to lead disciples. Ultimately, the subtle grasping which initially [124] obscures the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality is of the nature of air. Thus, as soon as it enters into the fundamental, absolute nature, the ground appears as baseless emptiness; and that is space. From that, appearances of space emerge unceasingly.

Subtle grasping sustains the basis of ignorance and obscures the primordial wisdom of accomplishment. Consequently, appearances of its luster emerge unceasingly as air. With the obscuration by ignorance of mirror-like

primordial wisdom, appearances of its luster emerge unceasingly as water. By grasping onto the primordial wisdom of equality as being real, its appearances as earth emerge unceasingly. With the obscuration by ignorance of the primordial wisdom of discernment, its appearances as fire emerge unceasingly.

From the obscuration of their essential nature, thoughts emerge. From the obscuration of the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality, thoughts of delusion emerge. From the obscuration of mirror-like primordial wisdom, thoughts of hatred emerge. From the obscuration of the primordial wisdom of equality, thoughts of pride emerge. From the obscuration of the primordial wisdom of discernment, thoughts of attachment emerge. From the obscuration of the primordial wisdom of accomplishment, thoughts of jealousy arise constantly. All mental afflictions [125] and all kinds of primordial wisdom are of the same essential nature, but they appear in different ways.

These are indications that all phenomena appear in five ways from one source: there is water, for water arises from fire; there is air, for air is set into motion from fire; there is fire, for heat emerges from fire; and there is earth owing to the arising of minute and partless particles from fire. Likewise, water arises as the moisture from earth; the nature of air is derived from the cavities of partless particles of earth; there is fire, for warmth arises from earth; and the nature of earth is due to the heaviness and solidity of earth. There is earth, for minute particles come into existence from the cavities of partless atoms of water; air is due to its power and its agitation in the form of great waves; due to warmth, the lower regions of water do not freeze; and the warmth of fire occurs due to the arising of warmth.

Moisture is the defining characteristic of water. Likewise, air is due to its lightness and motility; there is water, for it is present in the cavities of partless particles; there is fire, for heat evaporates the moisture of water; and water is

due to the presence of a cold tactile sensation. The essential nature of them all is space, so all five of the elements are present in each one of them. In the one reality-itself, the five potencies are all

present. Moreover, in each of the five transformations of potencies into lusters that set of five is complete, which symbolizes the fact that the nature of one primordial wisdom [126] appears in different aspects. Space appears as earth; space appears as fire; space appears as water; space appears as air; and space appears as space. They all originate from space, so they are known as elements.

The cycle of existence appears from the five aggregates in this way: with the entry of dualistic appearances into the domain of the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality, it appears as the aggregate of form; with the entrenchment of grasping and craving in mirror-like primordial wisdom, there is the aggregate of consciousness; with the entry of dualistic grasping into the primordial wisdom of equality, there is the aggregate of feeling; with the arising of clinging to reality in the primordial wisdom of discernment, there is the aggregate of recognition; with the entrenchment of clinging to reality in the primordial wisdom of accomplishment, it arises as the aggregate compositional factors.

In that way, the five aggregates result from the obscuration of the five essential natures; the five colors result from the obscuration of the five potencies; the five elements result from the obscuration of the five absolute natures; and the five mental afflictions result from the obscuration of the five primordial wisdoms. In short, the formless realm is a result of the bondage imposed by grasping onto the realm of the total-ground; the form realm is a result of the entrenchment of grasping onto the domain of the total ground consciousness; [127] and by achieving stability in the realm of the mind, one transmigrates as a god of the desire realm.

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Due to the emergence of appearances by way of hatred, the phenomena of hell manifest; due to the emergence of appearances by way of attachment, the phenomena of the preta realm arise; and due to the emergence of appearances by way of delusion, phenomena of the animal realm appear. With the accumulation of a slight bit of virtuous karma mixed with dominant thoughts of jealousy, at the time of death, that karma is catalyzed by craving and grasping of the same sort, resulting in the emergence of phenomena of the asura realm. Even though one has strived in virtues by which merit is

accumulated, under the causal influence of the mental afflictions known as the five poisons and the catalytic influence of a virtuous mind at the time of death, phenomena of the human realm emerge. By the power of achieving stability in the virtue of a contaminated, yet enormously virtuous, mind activated by the ignorance that is the basis of grasping onto the I, one transmigrates as a deva of the three realms, and those phenomena emerge. Those are like the emergence of dream appearances.

As for all the daytime and nighttime phenomena among such delusive appearances, in the domain of the phenomena of the inanimate universe, there are diverse appearances of its inhabiting sentient beings-which are like its essence and vapor-with all manner of their forms, shapes, colors, sensory faculties, languages, species, and so forth. Due to varying degrees of virtue, three modes of appearances manifest. As for impurities, there are appearances of the pure, impure, and the neutral. Due to the activation of one's motivation, the consequences of heavy, light, and medium nonvirtuous actions emerge and are experienced as all the miseries of the animate and inanimate universe.

In the vast, immense expanse of limpid, clear mental cognition free of contamination, like space, the six appearing objects emerge by themselves; and they are differentiated merely with labels. Apart from that, there are simply no

different, self-defining apertures of the senses. Limpid, clear mental cognition together with the unceasing emergence of objective forms constitute visually apprehended objects. They are taken to be good, bad, and indifferent; they are named, apprehended as referents, and with subtle conceptualization they are viewed as truly existent things. In one's mind that is called visual apprehension. In reality, subtle and coarse types of mental cognition are called visual apprehension and visually apprehended objects. Those appearances are not objects. The planets and stars in the ocean are not the ocean. For just as there are no stars in the water, appearances are not the mind.20 Just as there are no stars appearing in the ocean apart from the ocean [129] there are no appearances apart from the mind. Apart from dependently related events, from the very time of an

appearance it is not established. Ascertaining this is a crucial point.

Therefore, if you think visual consciousness is form, form would not be other than visual consciousness; and form and consciousness would be inseparable, such that no more than one form could ever emerge. Thus, form has no enduring presence, and from the very moment it appears, it vanishes into the absolute nature, and reappears in other indeterminate ways. When they transform, that indicates no change apart from the mere condition of a mindlessness with respect to the consciousness of the appearing object. For example, by means of coarse conceptualization, one knows that one is moving. When, due to subtle conceptualization there is the appearance of taking steps, with each step, the appearing earth, stones, mountains, caves, fruit-trees, animals and so on vanish into emptiness as soon as they appear. As they successively emerge, then vanish into emptiness, that subtle mental consciousness is called grasping.

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20 The essential nature of appearances is the mind; the essential nature of the mind is awareness; and the essential nature of awareness is reality-itself.

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Grasping is vital energy, so that is emerging vital energy. Subtle vital energy transforms things, so that is transformative vital energy. By grasping onto the self, calling it I, it appears as the body; [130] and with the stable pride of unceasing appearances and consciousness one grasps onto a basis of appearances and the mind, so that is grasping vital energy. Within the pervasive ground, it differentiates everything into objects over there that are far away and close by and so forth, so it is differentiating vital energy. Thus, since it dissolves all mental states and appearances into the realm of the vacuous total-ground, it is called destructive vital energy .Those five, impure, samsaric vital energies are not different from mental consciousness and subtle thoughts.

Likewise, whatever objects that emerge as appearances of sounds in the field of limpid, clear mental cognition are called audial consciousness.21 Coarse mental consciousness of objects variously

emerging as appearances of sounds are called audial apprehended objects; and conceptual, subtle, mental consciousness that holds onto sounds is called audial apprehension. Similarly, those objects that emerge as appearances of smells in the field of limpid, clear mental cognition are olfactory consciousness. Coarse mental consciousness of objects variously emerging as appearances of smells are called olfactory apprehended objects; and conceptual, subtle, mental consciousness that holds onto smells is called the mind of olfactory apprehension. [131] Likewise, the coarse mental consciousness that emerges as gustatory objects, that appears as tastes, and constitutes the objects of emerging tastes is called the apprehended object of gustatory consciousness; and the subtle, conceptual, mental consciousness that holds onto good, bad and neutral tastes is called gustatory apprehension. Similarly, the coarse mental consciousness that emerges as tactile objects is called the apprehended object of tactile consciousness; and the subtle, conceptual, mental consciousness that holds

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21 The meaning here is not that objects themselves are consciousness, but rather that the potency that allows them to appear and be apprehended is consciousness.

onto good, bad, and neutral tactile sensations is merely called the mind of tactile apprehension.

You must know that there are no appearances other than those consciousnesses, and consciousness itself is not appearances. If you think consciousness is appearances, the mind would be dominated by the arising and passing of appearances, and when they vanished, the mind would also have to vanish. Thus, appearances are not asserted to be the mind. If you maintain that they are other than the mind, during the daytime, the nighttime, and the intermediate state, why do appearances continuously occur to the mind? There would be no reason why earlier appearances should cease and later appearances should occur. Therefore, appearances are not the mind. There are no appearances other than the mind: by ascertaining that no philosophical stance can be established for actual appearances,

one is freed of all philosophical assertions. [132] That is the meaning of their being not other than the mind.

In that way, when all appearances and mental states arise in their natural order, the whole of samsara appears; and by reverting from their natural order, they enter the womb of the total-ground, and they suddenly vanish without the slightest trace. As for the individual appellation of doors of the senses, they are so designated when such openings appear where none exist. Due to the I, appearing objects manifest, conditioned by the appearance of the body; and they are called the six types of coarse, mental consciousness. From each of the sense faculties of sentient beings appearances of seeing, hearing, feeling, and experiencing result in self-deception. Thus, recognize the importance of knowing how that occurs. The fact that they are not the sense faculties is indicated by the appearances in a dream and in the intermediate state. Even if one's eyes are closed or one is blind, forms appear to mental cognition. Induced by conceptualization, sounds appear to mental cognition. Likewise, the mere

appearances of all smells, tastes, and tactile sensations to the doors of sensory perception emerge in mental cognition. The fact that the sense doors are none other than mental cognition is revealed by their very nature.

In general, as for outer phenomena, that which is grasped while grasping onto the I is a personal identity. External appearances of the inanimate universe, its internal, animate sentient beings, and all intervening appearances of the five sensory objects are asserted to be apprehended objects. [133] As for inner phenomena, afflicted cognition is called an apprehended object, and the mental cognition that holds onto objects is called apprehension. As for secret phenomena, mental consciousness is known as the first consciousness. Due to contributing circumstances, it transforms into the nature of objects known as apprehended objects. That which labels, grasps the referents of labels, differentiates, and holds onto all good, bad, and indifferent things is to be known as the apprehending mind.22

In reality, all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana must be established as great emptiness. Thus, as a result of recognizing this by investigation and analysis, great wisdom manifests, and that is called realization.

O Abhasendra, recognize that all phenomena are self-appearing! Wisdom has no task other than that. Recognize all of samsara and nirvana as great emptiness! There is no realization apart from consciousness. This is the direct sight of emptiness. There is no meditation apart from seeing. This very clarity that makes appearing objects manifest is said to be the mind, which by nature is clear light. The identification of that is called the self-cognizing clear light. There is no unprecedented clear light apart from that. [134] There is no so- called middle way apart from the realization of the great emptiness of samsara and nirvana. There is no insertion of vital energy and the mind into the central channel apart

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22 The one Tibetan term 'dzin pa is here translated both as grasping and as apprehension.

from the transference of vital energy and the mind to primordial wisdom in the great center in which the absolute nature of the ground becomes manifest.

In the past you have grasped onto samsara and nirvana, the animate and inanimate universe, and all sensory objects as being truly existent, not knowing the manner in which they are not established. Now, as a result of knowing that, there is no awareness other than coming to rest in the nature of reality. There is no so-called Severance apart from the severance of clinging onto the appearances of the three realms, which brings about Severance to the absolute nature of identitylessness. This very ground of the three realms, which is ethically neutral, limpid, and clear, is called Isvara Mahadeva. His body appears as the desire realm; his speech appears as the form realm; and his mind appears as the formless realm. The five sensory faculties emerge from the essential nature of his six types of consciousness. Devas, matrkas, raksasas, and the eight classes of mattas emerge from the luster of his eight types of

consciousness. The higher classes of gods and demons emerge from the coarse arrays of his thoughts included among the 84,000 mental afflictions. Vighnas, pisacas, raksasas, and bhutas emerge from the arrays of subtle thoughts.

Flesh as earth, blood as water, [135] warmth as fire, and breath as air maintain the body comprised of the four elements. Empty space manifests as the mind, and embodiments of subtle arrays of thoughts emanate as various forms of sentient beings. Therefore, the cause of a deity resides in the total ground of sentient beings. Emptiness is apprehended as form, and form is brought to mind. In order to refresh one's recollection of it without forgetting it, it is constantly invoked by name. By repeatedly visualizing many such forms dissolving from the domain of the five elements, one achieves a little stability in the visualized objects. By so doing, mental forms will empirically be actualized in accordance with one's visualization. As a consequence of grasping onto the true

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existence of empty space, the empirical actualization of the entire phenomenal universe is unquestionably an apparition of a single type of grasping.

Actualizing a deity from the realm in which the deity is not established comes about due to the ignorance of one's own ground acting as the cause of the entire realm of the deity. Thus, with that very cause the mind presents and imagines the deity as a form. As a result, it is actualized in no more than two or three months. If there were some substantial deity apart from that, it would be actualized by one person invoking it; but it is easy to determine that no one achieves the deity other than the individual who has actualized it. If there were no cause of a deity, [136] it would not be actualized even if one tried. That can certainly be understood by taking a close look at mundane activities.

Son of good breeding, the quintessence of the Tantra of the Black Apparitions of Isvara is none other than this. If this is not realized, even if you try to actualize a deity, it will be difficult to succeed. Know that the lack of success would be like that of a person shouting into an empty valley and counting the times he does so.

Because he is in control of the three realms, he is the basis of the three realms. He is rich in his enjoyment of emanating the three domains of existence. The facet of clarity of his nature is the great differentiation of samsara and nirvana. With in-dwelling, originally present, primordial wisdom as the cause, the bodily aspect of the apparitional Black Protector Mahakala appears and comes into existence. The realm of his speech consists of spontaneous displays. The realm of his mind is empty and clear. All the Dharmas of the path and fruition emanate from the aspect of his excellent qualities. The emanating appearances of all the Protector Father Tantras from the aspect of his enlightened activities are of the nature of skillful means; and all the Goddess Mother Tantras emanate from the aspect of the wisdom of emptiness.

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Limpid, clear space itself is the Space Protector. The nutriment of earth is the Earth Protector. The nutriment of water is the Water Protector. The nutriment of fire is the Fire Protector. [137] The nutriment of air is the Air Protector. The nutriment of the vital essence is the Vital Essence Protector. All those are emanated from the aspects of limpidity and clarity. Whatever is emanated, the total-ground consciousness, of the nature of emptiness and clarity, is present as the cause. Emanated from that, the mind presents forms, which are stabilized by a continuous stream of consciousness. Then by means of conceptualization one considers all the nutriment and vital essences of the animate and inanimate world as the rupakaya. By meditating on that, their splendor and power grow. By calling them by name, such that one's recollection of them is unwavering, signs of actualization will occur at least month by month; and after just a year has passed, they will unquestionably be actualized in the modes of one's sensory perception. Whatever deeds one performs, one is a jnanasattva; and one's actions will disband the foes of ignorance and grasping onto the reality of appearances, so that they will vanish altogether.

One's essential nature is primordial wisdom, so one is a jnanasattva. One's formed aspect manifests as the aggregate of consciousness, so one is a mundane being. Thus, one half dwells in the essential nature of a jnanasattva, while the other half, in the nature of a mundane being, is presented as a glorious tantric guardian who is actualized

by the mind.23 The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Black Protector [138] is none other than this.

The emanated apparition of the Black Protector, the great lord of the outer and inner elements, the embodiment of afflicted cognition, grasps onto the reality of the elements in which the five poisons are equalized. Grasping onto that which is nondual as being dual, it is the agent who differentiates the states of

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23 When we are still involved in grasping, we are sentient beings; but when we are free of grasping, we are jnanasattvas.

self and other. This is how it is presents: the faculty of pride that ultimately sees space as substantial is the Space Rahula. The faculty of delusion that sees earth as substantial is the Earth Rahula. The faculty of attachment that sees water as substantial is the Water Rahula. The faculty of hatred that sees fire as substantial is the Fire Rahula. The faculty of jealousy that sees air as substantial is the Air Rahula. Their nutrition and vital essences are the cause of the movement and presence of the flesh, blood, warmth, and breath of living beings; and they are imagined as the embodiments of the five poisons. By bringing them to mind and repeatedly imagining countless numbers of them arising from their own respective elements and dissolving, their power increases; and while imagining oneself as a deity, they are actualized with unwavering consciousness. In order to stabilize that, one applies oneself to the mantra of invocation focused on one's meditative object, without one's consciousness being distracted elsewhere. By so doing, before long they will be empirically actualized. [139I Then by constructing one's deeds with conceptualization and making them concrete with consciousness, the great Rahula who is actualized from the apparitions of thoughts of the deity who is apprehended as a deity will annihilate on the spot the enemies that arise from the apparitions of thoughts. The Tantra of the Aggregate of Contact of the Black Planetary Mara is none other than this.

Consciousness, which devours appearing objects and is the creator of various apparitions, and appearances, which are of the nature of

limpid conscious awareness, exist by the power of profound skillful means and dependent relationships. A bounty of enjoyments is given as the appearing objects of oath-bound people who give and actualize harm to the enemies of the ten fields. The masters over all the elements and the animate and inanimate three realms are assassins who withdraw into the absolute nature the life and breath of enemies of the teachings of Secret Mantra. They are red in color, for

they have the ability of power. As a sign that they are involved in ferocious, violent activity, they have a luster of blackness. From self- arising consciousness that apprehends all the cardinal and intermediate directions and above and below arise the ten directional guardians. From the vital essence of consciousness appear the apparitions of the violent eight classes [of mattas]. The self-illuminating faculty of limpid, clear mental cognition [140] manifests everything. With clear visualization of the meditative object and with the power of stable apprehension as the cause, and with aggressive concentration as the contributing condition, the assembly of dependent relationships is brought about. By so doing, one swiftly succeeds in such practice. The Tantra of the Butcher Marlen Yaksa is none other than this.

The basis of emanation of all the eight classes of matta guardians of the doctrine is the black Planetary Mara bearing an afflicted mind. From his inner five elements, and with the power of the outer elements, the powerful red assembly is created and dwells in the warmth of the fire element. There are savage tsan of the flesh who move in the warmth of the flesh; there are savage tsan of the blood who move in the warmth of the blood; and there are savage tsan of the air who move in the warmth of the breath. There are savage tsan who appear as the warmth of appearances. The domain of hatred in the mind consists of the savage tsan of the mind. The heat of fire appears from its luster, and that is the red tsan of fire. Yellow tsan of earth move in the warmth of earth. White tsan of water move in the warmth of water. Green tsan of air move in the warmth of air. Dark blue tsan of space move in the warmth of the sky. They are all apparitions of hatred that blaze like fire. They are all under the power of great emptiness, which is the ground of the mind. Thus, the

absolute nature is apprehended as form. It is created and meditated upon with continuous, apprehending consciousness, [141] and when stability is achieved, empty form is

empirically actualized. Here is the method to make the enemies and demonic forces that originate from the elements and derivative elements destroy themselves: with the dependent relationship of the fire element as the cause and the achievement of stability in the clear visualization of that as the contributing condition, the classes of savage tsan arise. So that action will unquestionably be accomplished. The Tantra of the Savage Tsan Blazing Like Fire is none other than this.

The entity who presents delusive appearances, bearing afflictive cognition, the wrathful apparition who pervades and enters the whole universe, the embodiment of pride, the apparitional Yamaraja, Lord of Death, displays himself in appearances. This is the way he thoroughly enters the elements: the Fire Yama is present in earth in the midst of partless particles of fire; earth is the Earth Yama in the aggregates of particles of earth; water is the Water Yama, of the nature of earth, in the midst of partless particles; air is the Air Yama, present as earth in the midst of partless particles; space is called the Space Yama, for it appears as earth from the empty absolute nature. In the domain of the inner elements as well all flesh, blood, warmth, and breath appear from the assembly of the nature of minute and partless particles; [142] so they are Yama. Thus, grasping onto the reality of appearances is called the Mind Yama. It is the Lord of Death who assembles the causes and conditions that dissolve appearances into the absolute nature. With pride as the cause and the mind as the contributing condition, one creates and meditates upon them. As a result of continuous consciousness, an unprecedented, sudden dependent relationship is brought about. The Tantra of Wrathful Yama, Lord of Death is none other than this.

The emanation of great Visnu, an apparition of the mental affliction of self-grasping, the embodiment of the violent vortex of jealousy, appears as the yaksa called Kalayaksa. The Fire Yaksa is the movement of the motile vital

energy in the nature of fire; the Earth Yaksa is the movement of the basic vital energy of grasping in the element of earth; the Water Yaksa is the movement of the powerful, sucking vital energy in the element of water; the Air Yaksa is the presence of the vital energy that moves and pulses in the air element; the Space Yaksa is the movement of the obscuring vital energy in the element of space. Those are the causes and conditions for actualizing the yaksas with practice. Likewise, the basic root of the appearances of outer elements that also appear internally as the impure, five vital energies of the cycle of existence consists of all the inner yaksas. For those who greatly desire wealth and prosperity they are the basis for accomplishing that in the three realms. [143] Grasping is comprised of vital energy, so if one calls vital energies yaksas, and increases them and generates them, this is regarded to be especially effective in performing expansive activity. Moreover, if that is not practiced, one will not succeed, but if one generates them and practices this with clarity and stability, there will be success. The Tantra of the Treasury of the Black Yaksa is none other than this.

Likewise, emanations who present all manner of appearances, the embodiments of attachment, who, like water, create disturbances, are the matrkas. Those lords of attachment who totally pervade the psycho- physical aggregates, elements, and sense-bases are the inner matrkas. The moisture present in the earth element is the great Earth Matrka. The water present in the fire element is the great Fire Matrka. The moisture present in the water element is the great Water Matrka. The coolness present in the air element is the water of air, and that is the great Air Matrka. The appearances of space as water is the great Space Matrka. By practicing creating and meditating on the causal, self-defining appearances of all the faculties and sense-bases, the matrkas appear although they do not exist. By conceptually creating and meditating on them, one will succeed in the activity of annihilating all appearing enemies and

malevolent beings. The Tantra of the Display of the Ocean of mood of the Black Matrka is none other than this. [144]24

The emanation of the ferocious, untamed Visnu, imbued with afflicted cognition, the natural potency of the darkness of ignorance and delusion, is called the Nine-headed Nagamara Lord of Death. The apparition created from the power of generating and meditating on that being brings forth ignorance that pervades and enters everything. Here is how that is done: ignorance of the state of emptiness of all the inner elements is the Inner Naga; ignorance of the identitylessness of fire is the Fire Nagamara; ignorance of the empty nature of earth is the Earth Nagamara; ignorance of the state of emptiness of water is the Water Nagamara; ignorance of the state of emptiness of air is the Air Nagamara; ignorance of the empty state of space is called the Space Nagamara. They are all causal ignorance, and due to the contributing power of focusing on them and creating them, they are actualized. Apart from that, there is nothing whatsoever called a naga. The Tantra of the Black Darkness of Nagas is none other than this.

Parthivas emerge from the aggregates of grasping onto the I, and they are the conceptual mental factors that grasp onto the reality of appearances. There are parthiva who maintain the five elements as flesh, parthivas who maintain the five elements as blood, parthivas who maintain the five elements as warmth, parthivas who maintain the five elements as the breath, parthivas who maintain the five elements as earth, parthivas who maintain the five elements as water, piirthivas who maintain the five elements as fire, [145] partlrivas who maintain the five elements as air, and parthivas who maintain the five elements as space. Thus, all the outer and inner parthivas are included in each of the five elements, and the appearance of them as a single entity is the cause of all the classes of parthivas.

24The tantras cited here are found in the rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum, or Canon of Nyingma Tantras. This entire discussion is concerned simply with explaining how all these entities are created by the mind, without going into any of the details of the specific practices for accomplishing mundane siddhis by sublimating these beings.

The parthivas and vigrahas are created by conceptually focusing on them. Due to meditating on them, the contributing conditions appear

to that cause.25 The Tantra of the Parthivas' Assemblage of the Elements is none other than this.

Engaging with beautifully appearing objects such as form, sound, smell, taste, and tactile sensations is the cause of the apparition of Mahavisnu, afflicted cognition, the vicious, great mara; and that engagement is the white Devamara, the lord of pleasure. Surrounded by the assembly of subtle and coarse afflictive thoughts, this Mara of the Afflictions with unimpeded power leads beings astray to the miserable states of existence. The great Mara of the Aggregates, the impeded lord, leads beings to good, bad, and neutral manifestly appearing objects. The black, arrogant Mara of Death brings about clinging to appearances with various sorts of delusion in the darkness of ignorance, and he steals away the vitality of liberation and omniscience. Moving among and pervading the five elements, [146] the self-destroying Lord of Maras known as the Long Arm of Grasping arises as wild, vicious objects. In order to preserve the cause of all such maras and to actualize those who have not been actualized, those objects are clearly brought to mind; and, imputing them with the intellect, one accomplishes clarity and stability with a continuous stream of consciousness. One unifies this with mindfulness, without letting the mind be distracted elsewhere, and by calling them by name, due to the simultaneous assembly of the dependently related event of the catalyst of immutable mindfulness, the mattas are empirically actualized. The Tantra of the Black Mara Who obscures Like Darkness is none other than this.

Apparitions of the faculties of emanations of afflicted cognition and so on attract one to enjoyments and desirable objects, and due to clinging onto appearances, the Mahadeva Hrisikesa is actualized in one's thoughts. As he

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25 This phrase means simply that the contributing conditions interact with the primary cause.

roves in the domain of the inner elements, he creates the taste of pleasure and causes it to be experienced. Roving in the domain of the five outer elements, he creates desirable objects. With the cause

of the deva, and with the contributing condition of the diligent practice of generating him by visualizing him, that dependently related event is empirically actualized. [147] The Tantra of the Magical Creations of Enjoyments of the Mahadeva Hrisikesa is none other than this.

If you do not know the method for actualizing the proud guardians of the doctrine by the power of the dependent relationship of their causes and contributing conditions, and if you do not know this tantra for their creation, even if mattas were substantiated, you would not be able to set them to tasks. Even if you actualized them, they would not obey you. Regardless of how much you made offerings and supplications to them, the flow of their malice would not stop. Even if you set them on your enemies, your own life would be at risk, and your path to liberation would be blocked. At the beginning, middle, and end there would be no constancy, and various good and bad things would be revealed. Therefore, this most sublime of all tantras of creation, exceptionally profound for transforming all practices into primordial wisdom, is the unsurpassed essence of all practices. Why? By recognizing everything as being none other than your own appearances, you achieve great mastery over the vitality of samsara and nirvana.

As an analogy, when the one moon in the sky is eclipsed by Rahula, every single reflection of the moon in every body of water is eclipsed. Likewise, from the jinas, the perfected buddhas, down to maras, raksasas, arid rudras, the whole of samsara and nirvana is of the same taste in the absolute nature of Samantabhadra, the original ground dharmakaya. For people who know this and ascertain it, [148] all beings from the five types of jinas down to subtle pisacas and raksasas are ascertained solely as jnanasattvas who are none other than displays of

Samantabhadra. If individuals actualize devas by substantiating them, all those they actualize due to grasping onto objects as self-defining will be solely mundane beings; so it is certain that not a single one will be a jnanasattva. Therefore, by knowing this tantra for the creation of mattas in general, whatever deva you actualize, that is the cause of their being actualized as jnanasattvas; and the

means of swift success will be within you. Moreover, the deva who is your own creation will be under the mastery of your own ground; and devas who are actualized as apparitions imputed by conceptualization upon appearing objects will unquestionably accomplish enlightened activities in an instant. Within those displays, they cannot inflict harm; and the devas who are actualized with clear, stable, manifest consciousness kill the enemies and demons who arise from the potency of thoughts. No karma or karmic consequences arise from such deeds.

All the devas and guardians who are propitiated and actualized in those ways are originally not established; they have never existed; and they have none of the fundamental roots of arising, abiding, and departing. That which causes that which does not exist to appear to exist is present in one's own mind-stream. By the power of creating and meditating on them as forms and as entities with signs, [149] they are empirically actualized. The entire animate and inanimate universe with all its sensory objects is originally free of any fundamental ground. While not established, the entire phenomenal world with all its sensory objects is made to appear directly and is illumined by mental cognition. It is imputed by the intellect and fixedly grasped by conceptualization as being real. In that way it is brought forth and actualized as if it were truly existent. Know this to be so.26

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26 The emphasis of the above section is on realizing the nature of all guardians, demons, and gods as projections of your own mind. Then realize the nature of your own mind to be awareness, and the nature of awareness to be the sugatagarbha. By thus realizing the whole of samsara and nirvana to be of the same nature, it is easy to accomplish all mundane and supramundane siddhis.

Owing to the obscuration by ignorance of the original, primordial ground, all the qualities of the appearance of the ground are hidden inside. The appearances from its luster which, from the side of the appearances, arise as truly existent are skillful means. The nothingness from the side of emptiness is wisdom. The union of the divine father and mother is the ultimate path, reality itself, which is

none other than nonconceptual, primordial wisdom. That arises from the dependently related assemblage of causes and contributing conditions.

In that way generate the power of meditation, layout the collection of offerings, which are like illusory substances, recite the increasing mantra, which is like an illusory mantra, and display and visualize those offerings as objects to the six senses, like illusory apparitions. Until those sensory objects are dissolved back into the absolute nature, [150] visualize inexhaustible sensory objects as a space treasury. That is called the illusory apparition of samadhi, and it is the unsurpassed, greatest of all offerings and gifts. Symbolically, that is like the display of enjoyments of Nirmanarati.

Take the analogy of a person caught up in a dream in which he experiences only misery, with no enjoyments whatsoever. While in that state, someone else forcefully wakes him up, shifting his appearances and bringing forth all manner of wonderful things, so that he is brought to a state of happiness. Likewise, one shifts the appearances of the offerings and gifts, emanating those sensory objects as a treasury of space. In the expanse of the limpid, clear, uncontaminated six faculties of all those recipients of offerings and gifts, which are like a body of water, they are projected by the power of dependently related causes and contributing conditions, including the sensory objects, mantras, and samadhi. Recognize them as being like the sudden appearance of reflections of the planets and stars.

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These crucial points are the unsurpassed field of experience of people who directly see the mode of existence of reality-itself. All the acts of offering and giving on the part of those who do not know that are nothing more than children's games; and they will not succeed in their true aims. [151] Thus, you, who are like an illusionist, project an illusion- like feast of sensory objects and enjoyments to the recipients of those offerings and gifts, who are like the illusionist's audience. The recipients of those offerings and gifts are pleased, and finally the illusory artifice dissolves into the absolute nature. Likewise, the agent, act, and object of the act are expansively left in the nonobjective absolute nature. That is the samadhi of reality-itself manifesting as illusions.

The causal collection of merit is accumulated by mental cognition, and the resultant great collection of knowledge perfectly manifests as awareness. Thus, without mental projection, the collection of merit is not perfected, so that is something that does not please the recipients of the offerings. Even if one dedicates something as a ransom to demons or as something to help the deceased, the debt is not paid off, for it is impossible to dispel the various torments of suffering. When the demons who are brought into existence from the conceptualizations of grasping onto demons appear as one's enemies, it is as if you kill yourself with your own weapons. Therefore, observe how all ritual activities of subjugating demons, of protecting the living, and guiding the dead are impotent; and recognize the importance of abandoning activities that fail in this and future lives. While contemplatives who realize the nature of reality itself, suchness, [152] strive to accomplish the welfare of themselves and others, they definitely succeed without strain as a result of the powerful blessing of the samadhi of reality-itself playing itself out as illusions."

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Abhasendra then asked, "O Bhagavan, what kind of things are to be known by people who practice the profound Severance of maras?

May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Abhasendra, the profound wisdom of realizing identitylessness is the so-called object of the Severance of maras. This is what is to be known in that regard: first of all, the causal ignorance of oneself alone obscures one's own face as the dharmakaya. The consciousness of grasping onto the I rises up, then that which is not corporeal appears as a body. The very firm, dense consciousness of such obsessive grasping apprehends that body as oneself, and it devotedly guards that body, and holds onto all manner of hopes, fears, pleasures, and pains. Delusion in the cycle of existence is such that even while merely dreaming one obsessively grasps onto this body and for the sake of its sustenance, pleasure, and beauty one is tightly bound and totally ensnared with various mental states of attachment and hatred. [153] As a result, one is deluded in the endless cycle of existence, and maras, vighnas, pisacas and grahas occur.

Thinking that they are damaging the means for one's bodily survival, fear arises towards one's enemies; due to the appearance of their robbing one of one's possessions and enjoyments, hatred arises towards them. With the appearance of illness and discomfort in one's body, fear arises with respect to demons. With the desire for bodily well-being, hopeful thoughts arise for all good things, and fearing harm to one's body, fear arises towards all bad things. The mind is distressed by the body owing to illness occurring in one's body, the appearances of hunger and thirst in the body, and the arising of heat and cold in the body. Owing to the emergence of pleasurable and painful appearances with respect to the body, the mind is drawn to disagreeable objects and is tormented with suffering. In all one's lifetimes, apart from rare occasions of

unconsciousness, the mind accompanies this defiled, closely held body as if it were its shadow, so the body is the basis for various types of suffering.

All the hopes that arise for any kind of object [154] are called hopes in good, lofty maras, and all the fears of any kind of object are fears of base, bad maras. Therefore, the foundation of the cycle of

existence and the miserable states of existence is obsessive grasping onto one's body. As a technique for Severance of such obsessive grasping, one regards this body as being like a corpse. One looks upon consciousness as the conveyer of that corpse, upon obsessive grasping as the rope by which it is conveyed, upon rugged places as charnel grounds, and upon gods and demons as birds and carnivores. In those five ways one practices generosity.

This is to be known at all times and in every situation: one lives one's life clothing this body with beautiful, warm garments and supplying it with tasty, nutritious food. Towards this end, one takes on hardships, thinks nothing of fatigue, and shoulders the great burden of suffering. While ignoring the causes of eternal joy and their consequences, one strives diligently and without satisfaction. In the end, the flesh between one's skin and bones withers away; one's skin becomes covered with wrinkles; one's legs and arms become like sticks; one's complexion deteriorates, and one takes on the color of a rotten, moldy corpse; one's chest and spine become crooked like steps on a stairway; [155] one's black hair becomes white; one's teeth fall out and the mouth caves in; the eyes grow dim and one cannot see one's way; it becomes difficult to get up, as if one were hoisting a corpse; it becomes difficult to sit still, as if one were carrying a burden; one's intestines rumble due to indigestion; and one needs to urinate frequently so that one cannot quench one's thirst. Disturbed by a blizzard-like din of all such pains and miseries, there will come a time when not an iota of joy remains. Then this body cannot be sustained even with care, and it cannot be

protected. Repeatedly ponder the pointlessness of striving for the sake of this body.

In general, pisacas are devourers, for they consume the fruits of omniscience; and vadhakas are murderers, for they present the appearances of birth and death within the cycle of existence. They cut off one's vitality, for they sever the artery of liberation; and they take away one's breath, for they steal the breath of happiness. The myriad pisacas of mundane existence are so called, for they make the cycle of existence that has not come into being come into being. The ten grahas are so called, for they torment one in lifetime after

lifetime. The harinis are so called, for they steal away the collections of merit and knowledge. Nagas, grahas, and ksamapatis are the delusions produced by the causes and conditions of ignorance. Male grahas, parthivas, and vigrahas are apparitions of hatred toward other objects. Female grahas and pisacas are apparitions of attachment toward sensually pleasant phenomena. [156] The 80,000 types of vighnas are so called because they obstruct the path to liberation. Village pisacas and village gyuks are so called because they dwell in the village of the five aggregates. Seraks are so called, for they have no contentment or satisfaction. Damsis are so called, for they cause one to transgress one's samayas. All grahas, vighnas, vinayakas, and bhutas are assembled in this very body, and they do not exist anywhere else. Upon examining this condition, sever obsessive grasping; and in order to counteract such craving, recognize the importance of applying yourself to giving away your body.

As for recognizing the body, inwardly it is a defiled, closely held illusory body; in-between it is an illusory body of delusive appearances of sensory objects; and externally it is an illusory body of tangible appearances of the elements. The essential nature of all these is emptiness. The conscious awareness that grasps onto that which is empty as being real is the mind, so the

mind is sent to the absolute nature.27 The reality [of this body] is transformed into a corpse, then the self, the agent who does that, is recognized as being like an illusionist.

The body is transformed into desirable offerings as in an illusory feast, while the recipients of this offering are recognized as being like an illusory, projected crowd. As for the white offerings, [the corpse] is transformed into a mound of the three white offerings and the three sweet offerings and is then offered. As for the multi-colored offerings, [the corpse] is imagined as a splendid array of various desirable things and is then offered. [157] As for the red offerings, [the corpse] is imagined as flesh, blood, bones, marrow, and fat and is then offered. As for the black offerings, [the corpse] is imagined as black fluid to purify illnesses, grahas, vices, obscurations. Those offerings are prepared and presented on the four

occasions.

At all times and in all situations relentlessly dismiss all the anxieties and worries of your mind. Force yourself to hope for all undesired illnesses and miseries and rejoice in them. It is crucial to train earnestly in the attitude of taking the sufferings of others upon yourself and giving them your happiness. In general, go to all places inhabited by demons, and there strive in the crucial task of forcefully arousing ideation. While externally manifesting gods and demons have never existed, when gods and demons created by ideation appear, or when their apparitions appear, rejoice as if you were a vulture who has come upon someone dismembering a corpse. When internally manifesting pains and diseases occur in your body, rejoice as if you were a beggar who has obtained food and wealth, and think and say, 'May many more such things continue to happen!' [158] Moreover, if secretly manifesting pleasurable and delightful appearances occur to your mind, immediately sever attachment and craving; and

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27 That, is the mind is separated from the body and departs in the form of a primordial wisdom dakini.

as soon as any sort of suffering and unhappiness occurs, sever hope and fear and cultivate a sense of good cheer. The most essential point is to wish, with a sense of sheer abandon, 'May someone take this body away!' Know that those are the three types of practices for all external, internal, and secret events.

Consider, 'When this body turns into a corpse, whether it is incinerated, thrown into a river, or buried underground, all my efforts and all the difficulties I have undergone on its behalf will be in vain. What a great waste! It is best to give away this body, which is the most prized thing in this world. Now why couldn't I disengage from this basis of the cycle of existence and the miserable states of existence and proceed to the citadel of great liberation!' In that way apply yourself to the profound practice of the Severance of maras. If you do not properly comprehend this critical point, the practice called Severance will be nothing more than an oral recitation and

noise-making with a damaru and bell. First of all, correctly establish and realize the nature of profound emptiness, which is the basis of Severance. This is something you must know. [159] The culmination of the practice is coming upon the perfect nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana in the absolute nature of pristine space. That is the ultimate, supreme goal. The Tantra of the Profound Discipline of the Severance of Maras is none other than this."

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The Questions of Vidyavajra

Then Bodhisattva Vidyavajra rose from his seat and said to the Bhagavan, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, how excellent! Is it true or not that simply by knowing one's own nature, called the Great Perfection of empty awareness, knowing that all the phenomena in the universe are by nature not established, and knowing their empty status and origination, one ascertains this yana? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, knowing the way of emptiness in which all phenomena are by nature not established is the great, universal foundation of all the yanas, and it does not pertain to one yana alone. All meditations performed by those who do not know this may constitute mental virtue, but such meditations do not bring them even a hair's breadth closer to the path of liberation. Therefore, the revelation that all phenomena, from form up to the omniscient mind, are emptiness [160] is the sublime quintessence of the teachings of all the jinas, and it is called the universal foundation of all the yanas, That view is the indispensable, great, fundamental ground of all the paths. Due to the specific path that accord with the faculties of superior, middling, and inferior individuals--which, in turn, are due to their metabolisms and the functioning of their senses--many sorts of yanas are revealed. Correctly know the manner in which the Great Perfection is the ground and result of all yanas, and come to the nature of reality.

This is its mode of being: it is the great, rootless, and groundless, the pervasive realm of space, and the nonobjective, unobstructed display. It is the great reality, primordially free of all flaws, contaminations, and habitual propensities. In terms of external objects, there is no buddha other than that. Taking into account the

many, vast, inconceivable buddhas throughout the full extent of space, if all their primordial wisdoms and excellent qualities were to be

applied to improve this ground, they would not enhance it in the slightest. Why? Because there is no object to be enhanced. [161] Look at the unobstructed space of the dharmakaya, in which, from times past, the buddhas have not wandered within the cycle of existence. Except for delusive appearances of that which is not existent appearing to be existent, not a single sentient being exists. In terms of the infinite, limitless sentient beings throughout the full extent of space, even if all their vices, obscurations, and miseries were assembled and used to impair the realm of space of the primordial ground, see that not even an iota of harm would be inflicted, for that object is not established. Due to grasping consciousness, the cycle of existence merely appears but is not established, while the ground is primordially pure and untainted by flaws, so it is unwavering.

First of all, by examining the location of birth and the one who is born, one ascertains that they do not apply to the past, nor to the future, nor is there any birth in the present either.28 The one who is born and the location do not exist anywhere, so there is freedom from the extremes of birth. Likewise, cessation is not apprehended in the past or the future, nor does it exist in the present. The one who has ceased is also seen to be nonobjective, so there is freedom from the extreme of cessation. Discontinuity is either nothing, or if it is examined, [162] it is the ground of both the appearance of the impure cycle of existence and all the pure primordial wisdoms and qualities of the buddhas; and since they are groundless, there is freedom from the extreme of discontinuity. If existent phenomena are analyzed in terms of permanence, that should be directly visible to the eyes and there should ultimately be something to grasp with the hands. But since that is not seen even with the eyes of the jinas, there is freedom from the extreme of permanence. If the destination to which one comes and the one who is coming are examined, they are not in the past, nor in

28 This discussion refers to the eight philosophical assertions of birth, cessation, discontinuity, permanence, coming, going, differentiation, and identity.

the future. They should be established with directly verifying cognition in the present, but the agent who comes and the entire envirornment are nonobjective, so there is freedom from the extreme of coming. By examining the destination to which one goes and the one who is going, they, too are not observed in the past or in the future. In the present this directly verifiable entity is seen to be nonobjective, so there is freedom from the extreme of going. To examine the ground in terms of its being differentiated, since all phenomena are, without differentiation, of one taste in the absolute nature of the ground sugatagarbha, there is freedom from the extreme of differentiation. To examine the ground in terms of its unity, all the phenomena included within samsara and nirvana appear individually, with their own unique features, so there is freedom from the extreme of unity.

As an analogy for those two, if one examines the unimaginable planets and stars appearing in the ocean, [163] not even a single particle of those stars exists apart from the ocean; and, contrary to taking them to be a single entity, they appear individually without blending together. In the same way, recognize that phenomena are free of all philosophical positions.

Due to the fact that all phenomena arising as dependently related events are nonexistent and not established, they are totally free of the eight extremes of conceptual elaboration. If one adopts a position that falls to an extreme, one with factional, errant views has veered immeasurably far away from the state of buddhahood. Such a person wanders around in a daze in the midst of a dark jungle that is far from the path to liberation.

This is the liberation of the primordially pure, original protector, the omnipresent lord, the unwavering sovereign, Samantabhadra, the sugatagarbha. By examining and analyzing all external appearances, they are found to be the emptiness of their not being established as

substances, the emptiness of their not

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being established as signs, and the emptiness of their not being established as real. By examining and analyzing one's own mind internally, it is found to be a nonobjective openness without any ground, pervasive reality-itself without any root, free of all extremes of conceptual elaboration, so that is inner emptiness. By examining the intermediate mode of being of both appearances and the mind, [164] they are found to be not different from the great, nondual, single taste. Appearing from themselves and dissolving into themselves, the mind and appearances are neither conjoined nor separated, so they are emptiness that is devoid of disengagement, and that door of liberation is called emptiness.

Ground-awareness, the great liberation from extremes, cannot be indicated with words, for it transcends the objects of articulation. Nor can it be indicated by analogies, so it is incomparable and transcends factional extremes. It cannot be indicated by referents, so it transcends the conceptual objects of the intellect; and one alights upon reality-itself, the self-arisen nature, primordially at rest, free of clinging onto experience. That is the signless door of liberation.

The ground, the mind-itself, the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, the great, pervasive lord of the whole of samsara and nirvana, knows its own essential nature and is naturally liberated within itself. Thus, whatever is done to enhance this ground by way of the physical, verbal, and mental striving stemming from the natural perfection of the displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms, there is not even the slightest trace of benefit. Even if this ground wished to go from this location to some other realm, when one perceives the fact that the great realm of pervasive space is free of all going and coming in the three times, there is certainly not even a yearning for that condition; [165] and that is the desireless door of liberation. Those are the characteristics of the ground, the primordial Great Perfection."

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The Bodhisattva Vidyavajra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, if the primordial wisdoms and excellent qualities subsequently arise from

this ground, which is originally the dharmakaya, and the nature of Samantabhadra, and if origination and accomplishment do not exist, since all sentient beings are none other than buddhas, how does one distinguish between buddhas and sentient beings? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, at the time of ignorance, the ground becomes ethically neutral, not helped or impaired by excellent qualities, like a drawing of a lamp. Therefore, the delusion of sentient beings is like mistaking a boulder for a deer, mistaking a pile of stones for a human, mistaking a striped rope for a snake, mistaking silver for zinc, mistaking gold for pyrite, and mistaking a gem for an ordinary rock. When one knows the nature of the ground, the primordial great perfection of excellent qualities, one realizes that appearances have no true existence. That is like ascertaining that the boulder is not a deer, [166] like rejecting the apprehension of a mirage as water, like rejecting the apprehension of a pile of stones as a human, and like rejecting the apprehension of a striped rope as a snake. Just as one recognizes those as mistakes, one rejects the delusive clinging of grasping onto reality, and realizes that things are identityless. Then the ascertainment of the ground is nonobjective, great openness is the essential nature of meditation.

The superiority of that over sentient beings is like recognizing gold and silver, so that they become manifest as a treasure; and like the recognition of the gem as a gem after mistaking it for an ordinary rock, this recognition is called the wisdom of realization. Far surpassing sentient beings, it rots the seed of mundane existence. To give analogies of the destruction of mundane existence by wisdom, like water being saturated by salt, camphor being dispersed by

wind, and ice being melted with warmth, know that it shreds mundane existence."

The Bodhisattva Vidyavajra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, can one become a buddha simply by knowing that mode of being of the ground, without needing to meditate? May the Teacher explain!" [167]

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, if one does not know the mode of

existence of the ground, one will not become enlightened. Therefore, the body of knowledge of the intermediate teachings, namely the so-called Dharma Without Characteristics, reveal that all phenomena, ranging from form up to omniscience, are emptiness. Without knowing that, one will not be liberated. Therefore, the 6,400,000 sets of tantras of the Great Perfection were revealed. Be aware that if one could become enlightened without needing to know that, there would be no need for those teachings.

Even if one knows the emptiness of one's own mind but does not know the emptiness of the entire animate and inanimate universe, with its three realms, one has not realized anything more than personal identitylessness; so one has not surpassed the Sravakayana. Even if one knows that the entire animate and inanimate universe is empty from its own side, if one does not deduce its essential nature as emptiness and know the ground to be emptiness, then emptiness is reduced to something ethically neutral, and no benefit is derived.

Even if one knows it to be emptiness, one might think that emptiness has
no good or bad qualities and that excellent qualities and enlightened activity must stem from somewhere else. Understanding emptiness to be the emptiness of a vessel, and excellent qualities and enlightened activity to be its contents, [168] one might assert that enlightened activity from somewhere else enters into it. In that case, some other rich proprietor of enlightened activity, a donor who

fills up that vessel, would have to exist somewhere else, so if it were possible for the Buddha of that place to exist as something permanent, stable, and immutable, he would not be empty. And if emptiness were an emptiness of matter, with no good or bad qualities, this would falsely imply that all the phenomena of the animate and inanimate universe, with its sensory objects appearing everywhere in this life, during the dream-state and following this life would be self-arisen and self-sufficient; and the appearances and mind of the cycle of existence would be established. When one knows the nature of this and achieves penetration, appearances manifest as displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms. Due to that transmutation, the state of buddhahood becomes

manifest and the aspects of its excellent qualities are naturally perfected.

There may be many people who apprehend space as an emptiness of materiality without any good or bad qualities. Nevertheless, since space is the ground and essential nature of the five elements and the various sensory objects, what reason compels one to assert it to be an emptiness of materiality with no good or bad qualities? There are no appearing objects other than space; and if one grasps onto space as something substantial, there is no point in asserting samsara and nirvana to be great emptiness. [169] If there were something on which to meditate other than the manifestations of the realm of pervasive space, what is the point of speaking of no meditation, no referent,. and no grasping? The essential nature of the subject of meditation is emptiness, and if that is not recognized, one's meditation with no view is reduced to something ethically neutral. So how could that possibly be genuine meditation?

If one fails to recognize and understand samsara and nirvana as naturally appearing displays, what is the point of identifying awareness? Establishing that ultimately samsara and nirvana are of the nature of great emptiness, and then

recognizing and ascertaining everything to be of the nature of one space is realization; and just that is the view.

O Vidyavajra, by knowing that, thoroughly fathoming it, and gaining conviction in that, then earnestly applying oneself to the practice of meditation, finally one reaches the state of liberation; and that is the sublime key to practice. On the other hand, if mere intellectual knowledge were enough, with no need for meditation, then all the yogins, vidyadharas, and mahasiddhas of the past who practiced meditation on the basis of realization while courageously taking on hardships would have been wasting their time. [170] On the contrary , know that it is necessary to apply oneself to the essential practice of meditating on the basis of realization.

The reduction of the inwardly present ground to something ethically neutral is like the sky covered with darkness, while manifest ground-awareness is like the dawn breaking and the sun rising. Ignorance of

the ground is like having no master for the entire realm of a great king. Identifying manifest awareness for oneself is like a poor person without any status or possessions being enthroned as a king and enjoying royal privileges. Like a wealthy person imprisoned by a king or an enemy, who suffers from starvation, thirst, torture, and terrible surroundings for a long time, one experiences endless suffering in the cycle of existence due to the obscuration by dualistic grasping and ignorance of the ground, the primordial Great Perfection. Finally identifying awareness so that it becomes manifest is like that person being freed from prison, dwelling in his own home, and enjoying joy and happiness. Awareness is far, far superior to an ethically neutral ground. [171]

Here is an analogy for the presence of the ground as something ethically neutral. Imagine that a person is afflicted with a disease, and right under his bed

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is a medicine endowed with eight qualities.[29] But since he does not recognize it, he is tormented for a long time by his terrible illness. Then after some time he recognizes it as a healing medicine, eats it, and consequently his disease is cured and he is brought to good health. Similarly, once one has truly realized the mode of existence of the ground, manifest awareness apprehends its own state for itself. Consequently, the great, chronic disease of the cycle of existence is cleared out altogether, and one is brought to a state of eternal bliss.

Even if one has identified awareness that is present as the ground, there is no benefit if one does not practice. As an analogy, even if one has gold in hand, if one does not trade it for something that could help with food and clothing, but rather uses the gold as a pillow, one would die of starvation and exposure to the elements. Likewise, reducing the awareness that has been identified to something ethically neutral is just like that. Even if one recognizes a wish fulfilling jewel for what it is, no siddhis are granted if one does not treat it with respect. Reducing the awareness that has been identified to something ethically neutral is just like that. Even if one has beautiful, warm clothing, if one does not wear it, one will die from the cold and wind. Reducing the awareness that has been identified to something ethically neutral

is just like that. [172] Even if one lives in a home with plenty of food, one would die of starvation if one did not eat it. Reducing the awareness that has been identified to something ethically neutral is just like that. Know the crucial importance of practicing after one has acquired knowledge and realization."

The Bodhisattva Vidyavajra then asked, "O Teacher Bhagavan, so it is. Is there any difference between a deluded individual who has identified awareness and one who has not?"

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29 The Tibetan medical tradition normally speaks of seventeen qualities (Tib, yon tan bcu bdun) of medicine, so this reference to the eight qualities presumably refers to the eight potencies (Tib, nus pa) of medicine, namely, heavy, oily, mild, sharp, light, rough, hot, and cool.

He replied, "O son of good breeding, there is no difference between one person who knows the route taking the wrong trail and another person who does not know the route taking the wrong trail. There is no difference between being robbed by an enemy one knows and being robbed by an enemy who is a stranger. There is no difference between one person who knows of the presence of a cliff falling over it and another person who does not know of it falling over it. Likewise, there is not even the slightest difference between those two."

Vidyavajra then asked, [173] "Bhagavan, so it is. What is the name of the yana for the knowledge of that reality imbued with all such excellent qualities? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, the ground-sugatagarbha cannot be improved, nor can it be impaired by bad sentient beings. It is free of the eight extremes of conceptual elaborations, it is imbued with the three doors of liberation, and it is the natural perfection of all the displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms. Knowledge of this truth and the reasons for it constitutes realization, and that distinguishes its superiority over other yanas. Knowing by means of other yanas that the ground is empty is a commonly shared field of

experience, but this Spirit of Perfect Awakening is a supreme distinction of this swift path. This is called the Ultimate Spirit of Awakening or the Supreme Yana of the Profound, Mysterious, Fruitional Great Perfection.

Vidyavajra then asked, "What is the nature of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, [174] "O Vidyavajra, the embodiments are like this. Many avenues of accumulating merit arise as appearances to deluded sentient beings. To take an example, in making prostrations, getting up and lying down are not the accumulation of merit. Rather, masses of merit are introduced by the faith and reverence of the consciousness of prostrating and the idea that prostrating is

virtuous. Knowing that fact is an aspect of the sugatagarbha, so that is the avenue for the generation of masses of merit. Taking steps in performing a circumambulation is not the accumulation of merit. Rather the very consciousness of circumambulating is an aspect of the sugatagatbha, so that is the avenue for the generation of masses of merit. As for making saccha images and constructing stupas, making forms of clay and stone is not the accumulation of merit. Rather, the very discernment of performing virtue is an aspect of the sugatagarbha, so that is the avenue for the generation of masses of merit. In offering butter-lamps, burning butter is not the accumulation of merit. Rather, the very discernment of making an offering is a facet of the sugatagarbha, so that is the avenue for the generation of masses of merit. [175] In making water offerings, filling a bowl with water is not the accumulation of merit. Rather, the very discernment of offering the bowls of water generates merit, so that is the avenue.

Whatever offerings are made, there is no real being who partakes of them, so if there were a direct, valid perception of one being present there, that would not constitute the accumulation of merit. But the discernment that generates virtuous merit acts as a cause for merely temporary, agreeable conditions in the future and for a sense of happiness arising in one's mind. As for verbal recitations, the mere utterance of syllables is not a cause of merit. Rather, the virtuous

consciousness of one's intention is an aspect of the ground, so the result is also produced by that. The avenue for those is reality-itself, one's own primordial awareness. As an analogy, if one scoops up some water from a great ocean and says, 'This is the ocean,' it is not in fact the ocean itself, but an aspect of the ocean; yet it is also not water from something other than the ocean.

Likewise, practices of generosity are sentient beings' entrances to the path as a means of generating a little temporary happiness; [176] and those are

creative expressions of reality-itself. As an analogy, one may dream of seeing a beautiful temple with a fine assortment of images representing the body of the Buddha, various letters representing the speech of the Buddha, and representations of the mind of the Buddha, such as stupas, vajras, and kilas. And one may then dream of prostrating to them, making offerings to them, circumambulating them, and so on. When one awakes, if one thinks, 'That certainly was done,' one generates an immeasurable mass of merit."

Then Bodhisattva Vidyavajra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, if virtuous karma occurs due to the functioning of one's intention, by transforming that into the spiritual path as virtue, if one performs actions such as the ten nonvirtues, might that also turn into virtue, or not? May the Bhagavan explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, for all nonvirtuous actions, such as having the basis of recognizing someone as a sentient being, the intention of bringing forth merit, the enactment of attacking someone's life, and the culmination of taking that being's life, there is one's own intentional consciousness and the subliminal consciousness of the appearance of someone else. [177] Nonvirtuous karma is produced from those, and that nonvirtue does not become virtue simply by imagining it to be so. All virtues and vices are not merely due to conceptualization. Know that the basis is knowledge, so joy and sorrow are produced solely by its functioning."30

Bodhisattva Vidyavajra then asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, thus, since every single thought is an aspect of the sugatagalbha, I understand that thoughts are the cause of merit, which produces

happiness, and also the cause of suffering. Therefore, please show how they are distinguished."

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30 The point here is that knowledge of the nature and object of one's act is crucial in determining whether one's action bears the karmic consequences of joy or sorrow.

31 Every thought is an aspect of the sugatagarbha if one recognizes its essential nature; otherwise it is simply an aspect of the cycle of existence.

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, even though every single thought is a facet of the sugatagarbha, one's subliminal ground-consciousness is aroused as one's motivation, and consequences are brought to fruition according to the appearances of the actions taken. Thus, the occurrences of pleasant appearances, miserable appearances, indifferent appearances and so forth are cast up solely by one's good and bad motivations. The fact that hot-tasting fruit ripens from hot tasting seeds, bitter fruit from bitter seeds, and sweet fruit from sweet seeds is due to those fruits being produced by their causal seeds. [178] If [thoughts] were not aspects of the sugatagarbha, there would be no way actions could ripen into their consequences.

Even though pleasant appearances arise, they do not endure, but are merely temporary , so they have no essence. Experiences of suffering, too, do not endure, but are experienced only for awhile, and the appearances of such experiences are like dreams. With respect to those who accumulate bad karma, the accumulation of the causal bad karma, which is their route, may give rise to temporary pleasure, but in the end, suffering arises. With respect to those who accumulate good karma, by accumulating good karma, which is their route, they may willingly take on temporary suffering of hardships and so on; but the fruition of that is the emergence of joyful appearances of the fortunate realms of existence; and when the experience of them comes to an end, such beings continue on from one cycle of existence to another, and they must experience suffering. Due to the very ignorance that obscures one's own nature as the ground, all joys and sorrows and good and bad karma are

accumulated as causes of the cycle of existence; so the grounds and paths of liberation are obscured. Therefore, by diligently applying themselves to sustaining their attention, people who practice meditation ascertain all manner of pleasurable and painful sensations with a single grasping consciousness." [179]

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The Bodhisattva Vidyavajra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, in terms of causal good and bad deeds and their consequences, is there any difference as far as their obscuring one's own nature as the ground is concerned? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, to accumulate good karma is to accumulate merit in the cycle of existence. To accumulate bad karma is to store causes of the cycle of existence. Both of them contribute to the cycle of existence, so there is no difference in terms of their obscuring the nature of reality-itself. As an analogy, both a white cloud and a black cloud obscure the rising of the sun in the sky. There is no difference in that regard, for in both cases the face of the sun becomes hidden. Likewise, there is no difference in the obscuration of the natural potency of the ground by virtue and vice, so they conceal the grounds and paths to omniscience.

Whatever one experiences of joy and sorrow, that has never existed in an ultimate sense, so it certainly does not help or harm one in the slightest. Upon careful examination, if one ascertains that joy and sorrow are not established, it may occur to one, 'What harm is there in something that is nonexistent and merely appears to exist?' [180] There is no difference between that and the experience of suffering that arises in a dream, which in fact is not established in reality at all. In the same way, there is no difference between one's satisfaction from pleasure and unbearable pain."

Then Bodhisattva Vidyavajra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, if buddhas and sentient beings and all qualities of the path and fruition are none other than the ground-dharmakaya, the sugatagarbha, what is the purpose and the nature of the teachings on the many sadhanas, mandalas, buddha-fields, Teachers and their retinues and so forth? Please explain how this is!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, in order for the nature of the ground-sugatagarbha to be made manifest, one may strive in various ways to fabricate and transform things with one's intellect. Consequently, all contrived experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonconceptuality, of attentional dispersion, excitation, and scattering, of laxity , dullness, and torpor, and of pains, joys, and sorrows are forcefully aroused until finally all thoughts are calmed in the nature of the ground, and primordially present consciousness is identified. Such meditation entails transforming the nirmanakaya into the path, in which the state of naturally settled mindfulness is sustained. Nowadays everyone regards this as their common practice, [181] but there is the problem that one does not attain the fruition of liberation. Thus, once one has determined the view, the nature of the ground-Samantabhadra must be made manifest; so there is both the direct identification of that for oneself and the identification of that in dependence upon the expedient path of the stage of generation.

O Vidyavajra, as for the direct identification for oneself, one first establishes all the phenomena included in samsara and nirvana as emptiness. Once one has ascertained them as displays of the space of reality-itself, one sustains the identification for oneself of the great manifestation of that state. As a result, one naturally settles in ground- awareness as the great freedom from extremes. That is the swift path, the spiritual vehicle of the Great Perfection. If one practices by resting naturally and effortlessly until the culmination of the dying process, one will unquestionably become a buddha. On the other hand, if, due to the power of past, bad karma one falls under the influence of distractions and spiritual sloth, at the point of death one dies as an ordinary being.

Due to being deceived by maras, some people appear to have experiences of the taste of mere talk and human words. Clinging to that with attachment, they become addicted to amusements, and waste their lives in chatter that

accomplishes nothing. [182] Unable to meditate, at the time of death they die as ordinary beings. Some people fill their minds with

desires for greatness in this life, for fame, elevated self-esteem, high visibility, and with self-praise. Wasting their lives in performing magic rituals, they, too, die as ordinary beings. Even when their health is failing, they are struck by compounded illnesses, and they are of an age when their lives are almost over, some people still burden their minds with desires for personal greatness, fame, and so on. Having disregarded meditative practice as if it were a clot of spittle, at the time of death they are more pathetic than ordinary beings; and they are compelled to die in misery. Others who crave experiences apply themselves solely to the domain of the intellect. Since they are not satisfied with and do not trust the view and meditation that are effortless and disengaged from activity, they do not practice that. Some people identify [awareness], but since they do not believe in it, they do not practice. Some are satisfied merely with identifying [awareness], and they do not progress beyond that understanding. Some people maintain a false understanding of the meaning, and they are deluded due to negligence. Such sentient beings who lack fortunate karma are very difficult to lead onto the ultimate, effortless path. Therefore, in reliance upon the conventional, effortful path, as a means to leading beings to the ultimate, effortless, absolute nature, [183] the embodiments and primordial wisdoms of the ground- sugatagarbha are fabricated as signs; and many sadhanas involving visualizations and recitations are taught in accordance with the many accounts of the names and referents of deities to be actualized, buddha-fields, palaces, Teachers and their retinues. All accounts stating that by striving in meditative practice one will reach some vast region somewhere out there called a buddha-field are called paths of expedient means.

All the jinas and jinaputras of the three times are taught to be included among the displays of the five embodiments,[32] the five classes of buddhas, and the five primordial wisdoms. Moreover, they do not exist as self-defining objects. Rather, taking all the primordial wisdoms and qualities of the realm of the ground-sugatagarbha as the basis, the teachings for the sake of disciples consist of [1] the signless dharmakaya which is the ultimate, or definitive, meaning, and [2] discussions of names and self-defining objects, in which one is trapped in the cage of signs, and those are the conventional, or

provisional, meaning.

First of all, the explanation of the five embodiments is as follows: all kinds of phenomena that appear as various subjects are of one taste in reality- itself, emptiness, so that is called Dharma. It is called kaya, [184] for it is like an accumulation, or aggregation, of inconceivable entrances to the path, of inconceivable experiences, and of inconceivable fruitional accomplishments stemming from the inconceivable array of specific metabolisms and faculties [of sentient beings].

With respect to sentient beings' obscurations due to ignorance, karma, and mental afflictions, from the very time that the ego-grasping consciousness arises, all appearances of the dream-state, the waking- state, future lifetimes, and the entire animate and inanimate universe, with all its sensory objects were not created by activities or brought about by effort. Rather, they are naturally completed as one's domain of experience. Likewise, at the time of buddhahood as well, purification, liberation, and all the displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms are not created by activities or accomplished by effort. Rather, they are naturally completed as one's domain of experience. For that reason they are called the sambhogakaya.

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32 The following discussion provides etymologies of the five embodiments, namely the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, nirmanakaya, svabhavakaya, and vajrakaya.

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The mind has never been activated and is not activated by thinking, 'I shall send forth emanations from the state of the ground-sugatagarbha.' Emanations have never been intentionally emanated, so they are not emanated. Just as the planets and stars in the ocean are not other than the ocean, so do all appearances of samsara and nirvana naturally arise as various emanations that are not other than the sugatagarbha itself. For that reason they are called the nirmanakaya.

As soon as there is the conscious sense of ego-grasping, there is no

way one's body cannot appear. Thus, [185] in all dream appearances, waking appearances, and appearances following this life, the self arises from thoughts of ego-grasping; and experienced objects, various types of living beings going through the processes of birth and death, and moving about appear as one's companions in an unceasing stream. All those appearances are called living being nirmanakayas.

For disciples who have the karma of being suitable vessels, the various avenues of accumulating merit in accordance with one's own metabolism and faculties, the various stages of the path, the various rupakayas that accord with one's own form, language, and conduct, and spiritual mentors, teachers, writings and so forth that train disciples are emanations of one's own sugatagarbha. So those teachers who reveal the path to us are called teacher nirmanakayas.

Representations of the bodies of enlightened beings, including paintings and statues that were created by certain artists and commissioned by certain patrons, as well as naturally appearing images formed from colored sand, representations of the speech of enlightened beings such as various letters, manuscripts, and books, and representations of the mind of enlightened beings such as stupas, kilas, and meteorite vajras are objects of devotions such as prostrations, offerings, and circumambulations. Those appearances as fields for accumulating merit [186] are not due to patrons or artisans, Rather, emanations

of one's own sugatagarbha appear to oneself, and they are called creation nirmanakayas.

Objects for the use of the mere appearance of the self include an inconceivable array of individual requisites of life and nonessential substances such as clothing, ornaments, household goods, bedding, food, drink, earth, water, fire, and air, houses, grass, trees, stones, iron, copper, silver, gold, and brass. Such types of mindless, nonconscious appearing phenomena are material nirmanakayas.

Those four types of nirmanakayas are emanations of the sugatagarbha that naturally arise in the objective field of ego-grasping consciousness. As an analogy, they are appearances like the

arising of heavenly bodies in a vessel of water, which originate in dependence upon a simultaneous configuration of causes and contributing conditions. Thus, until the self-grasping on the part of disciples disappears into the absolute nature, a continuous stream of nirmanakayas appears. When self-grasping dissolves into the absolute nature, the purpose of the nirmanakayas is fulfilled, which is like the reflections of planets and stars disappearing back into the heavenly bodies as soon as the water dried up. The appearance of an unbroken stream of nirmanakayas until self-grasping has dissolved into the absolute nature [187] is like the continuous reflections in limpid, clear water until the water dries up. The various kinds of emanations are accumulated like aggregations, so they are called kayas.

The nonconceptual primordial wisdom of reality-itself is the great reality in which the essence of all sugatagarbhas is unified, and it is the single- taste, absolute nature which is the essential nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana. Thus, it is called the Svabhava, and because it is like an accumulated aggregation of all primordial wisdoms and excellent qualities, it is called kaya.

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The ground is unmoved throughout the three times, and it does not change for the better or the worse, so it is called immutable, and because it is endowed with the seven qualities of the indestructible vajra, it is called Vajra. The seven qualities are: [1] invulnerable to all karmas, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities, [2] indestructible by any objects or contributing conditions, [3] real, for it abides as the primordially pure, self-nature of the great, primordial ground of the whole of samsara and nirvana, [4] incorruptible, for it cannot be contaminated by any good or bad qualities, [5] stable, for it is unfluctuating and unmoving throughout the three times, [6] totally unobstructed, [188] for it can pierce even the most subtle cognitive obscurations in the absolute nature of reality-itself, which transcends causality , and [7] invincible, for it cannot be transformed by either samsara or nirvana.

Thus, sentient beings lacking the necessary karmic propensities cannot possibly realize the entire mode of existence and mode of being of the sugatagarbha, the dharmakaya that is present as the ground, so they remain deluded in the endless cycle of existence. For all those who realize it, it is impossible for them not to achieve penetration to its depths. If one achieves such penetration, it is impossible that one will not become liberated, and if one is liberated, it is impossible that one will not become enlightened. Thus, it is endowed with the four vajra-pledges, and it is called the ultimate, indestructible vajra. Within that real vajra all paths and fruitions and all the excellent qualities of the wonderful displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms are gathered together, or assembled, as it were. Because of this aggregation and completion, it is called kaya.

All the jinas and jinaputras of the three times are included and revealed among the five embodiments. All of them are naturally perfected in the ground itself, and that is the characteristic of the ultimate ground. It does not exist as a

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separate reality, it has no real characteristics that exist individually, and it has no basis for verbal articulation. All teachings concerning names and individual real characteristics are called conventional. Moreover, the ground from which all the deities emerge is revealed as Samantabhadra. [189] As its creative expressions, the five classes of buddhas are said to come into existence from the five primordial wisdoms. The Buddha of the center and his animate and inanimate environment are brought into existence from the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality.The Buddha of the east and his world are brought into existence from the mirror-like primordial wisdom. The Buddha of the south and his animate and inanimate environment are brought into existence from the primordial wisdom of equality.The Buddha of the west and his animate and inanimate environment are brought into existence from the primordial wisdom of discernment. The Buddha of the north and his animate and inanimate environment are brought into existence from the primordial wisdom of accomplishment. Those assertions are not of a definitive nature.

Ultimately the essential nature of the ground, emptiness, is the universal ground of the whole of samsara and nirvana. [1] As such, it is called the absolute nature of reality , and because it is primordially self-arisen, it is called primordial wisdom. It is not located in the center, so placing it in the center is a mere convention. [2] Because the limpid, clear ground, free of contamination, gives rise to all manner of appearances of samsara and nirvana, it is called a mirror, and that very consciousness, which is self-arisen and primordially present, is called primordial wisdom. Speaking of it as being in the east is a mere convention. [3] All of samsara, nirvana, and the paths exist equally in the realm of reality-itself, the sugatagarbha, so that is called equality. [190] Transcending consciousness and objects of consciousness, that which reveals the nature of thatness without concealment is called primordial wisdom. Placing it in the south is a mere

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convention. [4] Ontological and phenomenological primordial wisdom is an unceasing avenue for the individual, unblended arising

of phenomena, so it is called discernment, and because it manifests that nature as it is, it is called primordial wisdom. Placing it in the west is a mere convention. [5] All purification and liberation and all displays of embodiments and primordial wisdoms are not created by actions, nor accomplished with effort, but are spontaneously brought into existence, so that is called accomplishing. The manifestation of such a mode of existence is called primordial wisdom. Placing it in the north is a mere convention.

Those five primordial wisdoms are not separate or distinct. All the individual designations of labels upon the essential nature of the ground sugatagarbha consist of conventional, provisional meanings. Know that ultimately, labels and things do not exist as signs, and the dharmakaya, which is unassociated with any direction, is free of signs.

For individuals who cling onto objects, objective buddha-fields are revealed in accordance with their own mind-streams. In terms of conventional, provisional meanings, the buddha-field of Ghanavyuha is said to be in the central region; but ultimately, [191] the infinitude and limitless aspect of the magnificent displays of the primordial wisdoms and qualities of the primordial ground, sugatagarbha, are called Ghanavyuha; and because it is like a field, a great domain in which the appearances of the whole of samsara and nirvana emerge, it is called a field; and since everything that arises of samsara and nirvana is of one taste in the sugatagarbha itself, it is called a realm.

As for that which is called the buddha-field of Abhirati, the aspect of great delight, which is not created by objective conditions or agents, in the nature of the limpid, clear, uncontaminated, ground absolute nature is called the buddha field of Abhirati. All primordial wisdoms and qualities and all the phenomena of

the paths and fruitions are naturally perfected in the ground, so it is a glorious buddha-field.

The nature of great bliss of the ground absolute nature, reality-itself, is called the buddha-field of Sukhavati. In the ground itself all deeds of purificatory and liberating primordial wisdom and all excellent

qualities are naturally, effortlessly perfected, so it is called the Field of Karmaprapurana. Teachings concerning their existence in the east, south, west, and north are not to be taken literally. Rather, they are taught for the sake of leading disciples who grasp onto directions. [192] Thus, the nonexistence of a buddha-field is called a field. As an object presented by the intellect, the qualities of the ground-sugatagarbha cannot be conceptually measured and fathomed by the intellect as great, primordial perfection; so they are called immeasurable. They suffuse the whole of sanmsara and nirvana, just as the abodes of the planets, stars, and other reflections in the ocean are ascertained in the great ocean. And just as space is like the abode of the entire animate and inanimate universe, the expanse of space is like the abode in which samsara and nirvana appear. The perfection of them all as displays of the absolute nature is the ultimate, and discussions of their forms, shapes, and colors are conventional.33

For people who cling to castes, the leader of two thousand, three thousand, or more villages is a king, and those who belong to that caste are called ksatriyas. Leaders of one hundred or fewer villages are vaisyas, and those belonging to that caste are also regarded as vaisyas. Those belonging to the servant-caste are vrsalas. Those who participate in pure conduct, partake of pure food, and are seen to have virtuous attitudes are brahmins. [193] Those having no regard for hygiene, who partake of blood and flesh, and who constantly delight in evil thoughts and deeds are regarded as sudras.

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33 The above paragraph provides an etymology for the Tibetan term gzhaI yas khang, literally immeasurable abode, referring to the divine palace in the midst of a mandala.

In accordance with that custom, the meaning of the teachings on the classes [of the buddhas] is as follows. The taints of karma, mental afflictions, and ignorance of the great, absolute nature--in which the essential nature of the ground, of one taste, nondual with all the jinas of the three times--are cleared out in the absolute nature, so that is said to be cleared out. Because the nature of primordial wisdom and

excellent qualities is expansive, it is called expansive. Emanations from the aspect of its essential nature are called the buddha class.34

The indestructible ground is endowed with the seven vajra-attributes, so it is called vajra, and emanations from the indestructible vajra-like ground are called the vajra Class.

A wish-fulfilling gem grants all the wishes of its owner. Likewise, inconceivable entrances to the path, inconceivable experiences, and inconceivable fruitional achievements arise from the ground-sugatagarbha in accordance with the mind-streams of all disciples, all with their own inconceivable metabolisms and faculties; so that is called the jewel class.

Although a lotus flower is born from slime, it has none of the faults of slime. Likewise, the ground-sugatagarbha itself is uncontaminated by the taints of the three worlds, [194] so that is called the lotus class.

In the domain of the ground-sugatagarbha all deeds are self-arisen and complete, not with actions and striving, so that is called the karma class. Those are merely verbal designations. Thus, the nondifferentiation and natural perfection of the classes is taught as the ultimate, and the contrived differentiation of the classes is taught as the conventional, provisional meaning.

The reference to Vairocana, the lord who is the master of the central region, as the basis of emanation of all the jinas belonging to the buddha class is

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34 The above paragraph provides an etymology for the Tibetan sangs rgyas kyi rigs, (Skt. buddhadhatu) literally buddha class, or buddha caste, which is frequently translated as the buddha-nature.

not ultimately established. The limpid, clear aspect of the natural potency of the ground, the empty absolute nature is made manifest by pervasive, all-seeing, great wisdom. Simply by doing so, all the primordial wisdoms and qualities of the domain of the ground-

sugatagarbha are fully illuminated, so that is called Vairocana. Due to that not manifesting, there is no Awakening; and merely due to its manifestation there is no difficulty in becoming a buddha, so that is the buddha class.

The indestructible great being endowed with the seven vajra-attributes, the ground absolute nature, is Prabhuvajra. The great Aksobhya is so called due to being unmoved throughout the three times. [195] The precious, spontaneously present, ground absolute nature, with its great displays of embodiments and primordial wisdoms, from which arise all supreme and common siddhis, the absolute nature endowed with all real meaning, is Ratnasambhava. Amitabha is so called due to being limitless and illuminating inconceivable displays of ground-appearances from the gound. In the ground absolute nature itself the meaning of all sublime Dharmas is naturally present, so it is called Amogha, and since all enlightened activities are completely accomplished, it is called siddhi.

Mamanyasridhatvaisvarya is so called because emptiness, the space-vajra, the great absolute nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana, replete with all the primordial wisdoms and qualities, is the creator of samsara and nirvana; and because she is the great mother of the whole of samsara and nirvana, free of movement throughout the three times, she is called devi.35 Great emptiness, the great pervasive lady, is endowed with the seven attributes of the indestructible vajra, so she is called Vajra; and since all the phenomena in the universe appear in the aspect of objects coming and going in the absolute nature of space, the great

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35 Another name for Akasadhatvisvari, the consort of Vairocana.

pervasive emptiness-vajra, she is called dakini.36 All manner of desired objects arise from the primordial ground, the primordially pure, spontaneously present, absolute nature, [196] so that is called Ratna; and because all appearances of the path and all qualities of the fruition emerge from the creative power of compassion in the immutable space of reality-itself, that is called dakini.37 Just as a lotus flower is unstained by mud, so is the sugatagarbha unstained

by the fault of attachment, so it is called Padma; and because many avenues of skillful means arise from the creative power of compassion in the space of reality-itself, it is called dakinis.38 All deeds are inactively accomplished in the realm of the ground-qualities, the great, primordial perfection, so that is called karma; and the appearances of coming and going of all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana in the expanse of the space of emptiness is the dakini of karma, that is called dakini.39 Those are merely verbal designations.

Space appearing as the nature of space is skillful means and conventional reality, while the manifestation of the inherent nonexistence of space is wisdom and ultimate reality; and references to the dakini of the buddha class consist of provisional meanings. The appearance of earth as earth is skillful means and conventional reality , while the manifestation of the inherent nonexistence of earth is wisdom and ultimate reality; and the designation of Ratnadakini is an provisional meaning. [197] The nature of water appearing as water is skillful means and conventional reality, while the manifestation of the inherent nonexistence of water is wisdom and ultimate reality; and references to Vajradakini consist of provisional meanings. The appearance of fire as fire is skillful means and conventional reality, while the manifestation of the inherent nonexistence of fire is wisdom and ultimate reality; and the designation of

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36 Vajradakin.i is another name for Buddhalocana, the consort of Aksobhya.
37 Tib. Rin po che mkha' 'gro, another name for Mamaki, the consort of Ratnasambhava.
38 Padmadakini is another name for Pandaravasini, the consort of Amitabha.
39 Karmadakini is another name for Samayatara, the consort of Amoghasiddhi.

Padmadakini is an provisional meaning. The appearance of air as air is skillful means and conventional reality, while the manifestation of

the inherent nonexistence of earth is ultimate reality and wisdom; and references to Karmadakini consist of provisional meanings.

All the jinas and jinaputras, including the thousand buddhas of this fortunate eon, who teach in order to guide disciples, are none other than the five embodiments and the five primordial wisdoms. Hence, all of them without exception are included among their displays. People within the cycle of existence perceive, cling onto, and are deluded by such things as class, genealogy, regions, homes, and gender. Thus, if they were not taught accordingly, disciples who cling to those things, [198] fixating on their permanence, would not be satisfied; and they would not follow the path of liberation. With this realization and taking the embodiments and primordial wisdoms of the signless dharmakaya as the basis, things bearing signs are revealed. But in reality certainly not even a single one of all the deities and buddha-fields is established."

Then the Bodhisattva Vidyavajra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, taking the signless dharmakaya, devoid of all extremes of conceptual elaboration, as the ground, and bearing in mind disciples who grasp onto permanence, paths are revealed as having signs and objectivity. How does one practice those teachings? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, there are many enumerations with respect to the referential path of the stage of generation, but with respect to the path of Secret Mantra Vajrayana there is the so-called complete, definite path and the so-called natural path of the powerful view. The former reveals the deities and buddha fields as definitely existent, self-defining objects, and it solely emphasizes the avenue of conventional, skillful means. [199] The ultimate view is merely implied, but not explicitly emphasized.

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As for the natural path of the powerful view, one first establishes the view and accurately realizes that the deities and mandala do not exist as anything other than apparitions of the original, primordial ground alone. Then in order to transfer and merge one's own body, speech, and mind into the domain of the three vajras, one takes the illusion-like samadhi as one's basis and recognizes the manner in which the

appearances of deities are created as if they were apparitions. Thus, by accustoming oneself to the visualized appearances of the stage of generation, one achieves stability upon one's own awareness; ordinary appearances and clinging are transferred to the nature of buddha-fields; and one's body, speech, and mind are transferred to the domain of the three vajras. Hence, that is called the transference and merging into a domain.

First one establishes that all phenomena in the whole of samsara and nirvana are of an empty, identityless nature; and finally one confirms first-hand that one's own awareness is never anything but a display of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms. That is called the real going for refuge in the mode of being. Remaining without veering from the state in which all the jinas and jinaputras of the three times are combined and in which their vital essence is unified [200] is the essential nature of going for refuge.

Proudly assume that fruition and applying oneself to its cause is a method that corresponds to the ways of the world. As an analogy, if someone were to go to a foreign kingdom, casually occupy some land, and apply himself to farming it, there is no way he could avoid the pain of being punished by the reigning king. But if he were to seek the protection of the king, submit a petition to him, then he would have the authority to do whatever farming or anything else he wanted with his land in that kingdom. Likewise, if one does not go for refuge by mentally taking the natural luster of awareness that is present as the ground-dharmakaya as one's outer, inner, and secret object of refuge, one is not

authorized to engage in the deeds of the Three Jewels. Consequently, the fruition would not be granted, one would succumb to obstacles, and one would have the fault of not being a suitable vessel for empowerments and spiritual counseling. Therefore, going for refuge by way of the threefold faith in the Three Jewels, offering them one's body, speech, and mind and all one's enjoyments and possessions without attachment, clinging, or grasping, and at all times and situations never even for an instant failing to entrust oneself to the sublime objects of refuge [201] is the foundation for all the samayas and vows and is the root of all empowerments and siddhis. Thus,

maintain this as your very life-essence itself.

Whether you are elevated or cast down, immersed in happiness or tormented with pain, and in any type of activity reflect, 'The Three Jewels know!' That is the sublime, fundamental ground of all practice. In particular, know that the naturally appearing, supreme Teacher of disciples is their holy spiritual mentor, whose body is the Sangha, whose speech is the holy Dharma, and whose mind is the Buddha. Know that the spiritual mentor is the synthesis of all the sublime objects of refuge. Know that the secret body appearing as the spiritual mentor of living beings is the root of all blessings; the secret mind, the treasury of primordial wisdom, which is the combined display of all the chosen deities, is the root of all siddhis; know that the apparitions of compassion who appear as myriads of guardians of the doctrine and Dharma protectors are the root of all enlightened activities.

Their essential nature is the dharmakaya, devoid of signs; their nature is the sambhogakayas, which consist of displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms; and the natural, creative expressions of their compassion are the supreme nirmanakayas, consisting of the entrances to the paths and fruition. Recognize them as the Omnipresent Lords of all the mandalas, and take refuge in

them without being separated from them for even a moment. Remain under their protection. Utterly entrust your mind, heart, and body to them. [202] Practice without abandoning them even at the cost of your life; and rely upon the principle deity of all the mandalas, without displeasing this being even in the slightest. If you indulge in false views or displease this being even in a dream, it is crucial that you bring forth remorse and confess this. If you abandon the vajraguru, this is tantamount to abandoning the Three Jewels, the Three Roots, the three kayas, the jinas, and jinaputras. In the mind-stream of one who does so, the primordial wisdoms and qualities and all experiential realizations will not mature; and however much such a person strives physically, verbally, and mentally, the accumulations of merit and knowledge will not be perfected, and the fruition will not come to maturation. Even if one devotes oneself to another spiritual mentor, blessings and siddhis will not occur. Due to

being possessed by the evil spirit of degenerated samayas, they will be transgressed.

As analogies, seedlings and fruit do not mature from a rotten seed, and branches and leaves do not grow on a trunk with a rotten root. Similarly, the vajraguru is like the root of the trunk of the Secret Mantra, and the vajraguru is like the seed and the field of the harvest of omniscience. Thus, recognize this fact, and devote yourself to the vajraguru without abandoning this being even for an instant. Know that if you recognize the spiritual mentor in that way as the synthesis of all the buddhas, and go for refuge while meditating on your spiritual mentor, in the nature of your chosen deity, in the space in front of you, [203] there is certainly no need to seek any object of refuge elsewhere.

As for the Cultivation of the Spirit, the cultivation of the ultimate spirit is as follows. In terms of spirit, narrow-mind, confining grasping onto oneself alone causes one to hold onto pleasure, pain, and indifference and regard all objects as being self-defining. Then desires and cravings arise in an unbroken

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stream. Thus, all appearances and mental states involving grasping onto appearances as real things are to be comprehended with discerning wisdom, and self-concepts and the reification of dualistic appearances are to be subjugated so that they disappear. Then the perception of identitylessness, an inactive state, free of conceptual elaboration, in which samsara and nirvana appear as displays of a totality is called the Cultivation of the Spirit that is the inception into the nature of being. That is the fruition of all cultivations of the spirit and is the most sublime of all Dharmas.

First of all, in order to realize the Spirit of Awakening, comprehending the nature of being of the whole of samsara and nirvana by means of discerning wisdom is called the Spirit of Aspiring for Awakening. Finally, the perception of samsara and nirvana as displays of the totality is called the Spirit of Venturing towards Awakening. When they speak of bringing forth the Cultivation of the Spirit those who do not realize this critical point say they accomplish its cause by aspiring for the fruitional Spirit of

Awakening; [204] and they say that is engaging in the mere aspiration for an object of conceptualization that is not the Spirit of Awakening. Such talk is merely giving a boy's name to a fetus in a pregnant woman's womb,40 but they do not have even the faintest realization of the Spirit of Venturing towards Awakening.

Therefore, these are the merely nominal teachings on intentionally training oneself in good thoughts, for the merely nominal Spirit of Aspiring and Spirit of Venturing for those who do not have the karmic propensity to inactively cultivate the genuine Spirit of Awakening directly: while visualizing the objects of refuge in the space in front of you, think, 'I shall deliver and liberate all sentient beings of the three worlds from the ocean of suffering of mundane existence and bring them to the state of omniscience.' With that

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40 That is, such talk is like giving a boy's name to a fetus whose gender remains unknown.

thought, commit yourself to accomplishing the great welfare of sentient beings by way of the Four Immeasurables, namely compassion, loving kindness, empathetic joy, and equanimity. In particular, the thought, 'I shall practice the meditation and recitation of the supreme, chosen deity!' is called the Spirit of Aspiring for Awakening; and steadfastly engaging in the meditation and recitation of the deity as a profound means of simultaneously accomplishing the Six Perfections for the sake of all sentient beings is called the Spirit of Venturing towards Awakening. [205] Know that to be the means by which your entire practice of Dharma will serve as a cause of perfect, great Awakening.

The graha, vighna, bhuta, the great pisaca who obscures the face of suchness, reality-itself, and creates cycle of existence of the three worlds is ego-grasping. The positive, good thoughts that emerge from that are devas and raksasas; all negative, bad thoughts are great, evil pisacas; and the subtle configurations of thoughts of craving and attachment are the class of vighnas who are the masters and mistresses of adversity. Thus, since not even an iota of any other pisaca or graha exists, even if you do things to expel and liberate

them, you will not attain the fruition of liberation. Therefore, the unconquerable, wrathful being who severs the vital root of self-concepts and the cycle of existence is empty awareness, which appears in the form of the Vajraheruka of hatred and his messengers and servants. By doing so, the rudra of the view of the self is expelled into the absolute nature, and the root of mundane existence is utterly expunged. As the great wisdom that realizes identitylessness arises as the universal splendor of mundane existence and peace, appearances arise as ornaments of awareness. Apart from the manifestation of divine embodiments of the original ground, there is no expulsion of vighnas. Thus, [206} take that fact as the basis.

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In accordance with the ways of the cycle of existence, before one first moves to a region, one makes it safe by expelling harmful beings such as enemies, thieves, and dangerous carnivores, and only thereafter does one settle on the land. Likewise, with yourself in the role of an illusionist, you create the illusion-like recipient of your generosity, as if he were an observer of the embodiments of your thoughts. Over the white offerings, red offerings, and ransom-tormas, which are like illusory substances, you recite the purifying mantras and increasing mantras, which are illusory mantras for substances. Consequently, with illusion-like samadhi you dedicate those rejected appearances of sensory objects, like reflections of planets and stars, to the water-vessel-like expanse of the six faculties of those beings. Thus, this visualization for paying off all one's debts, dispelling all one's arrears, and becoming reconciled with those who are hostile is praised as the best means of overcoming all adversities and obstacles.

Then you instantaneously imagine yourself as a ferocious, majestic, terrifying, wrathful being of primordial wisdom. From your body, speech, and mind billows of fire, foul odors, assemblies of wrathful beings, iron scorpions, weapons, and various substances used by sorcerers are emanated like hail. As a result, all malevolent grahas, vighnas, and vinayakas are totally, helplessly cast out into the darkness behind the outermost, black iron fence, like paper blown away by the wind, where they are dazed and confused. Imagining that is called the visualization for expelling vighnas, and that is

taught as a method for preventing the occurrence of obstacles in one's meditation on the deities and mandala that one is actualizing. By regarding thoughts as demons, that is a profound technique for getting rid of hindrances that might destroy emerging siddhis.

With respect to the wheel of protection, the actual wheel of protection is as follows: by knowing that the whole of samsara and nirvana is a display of the

Spirit of Awakening, one ascertains that all violent beings and objects of their violence are originally not established. Thus, all vighnas and malevolent beings are released right where they are, making them disappear. That is called the ultimate wheel of protection or the self-arising, pristine wheel of protection.

Here are practical teachings for those who know that, but do not have confidence when it comes to their sensory activities: withdraw the small wrathful beings and sorcerer's substances that demarcate the emanated apparitions of enlightened activity .Thus, all regions above, below, and in between are sealed closed with no gaps, [208]and they appear in the aspect of a celestial mansion of a blazing wheel, of the essential nature of the primordial wisdom of absolute nature of reality. On its outer periphery, the essential nature of mirror-like primordial wisdom appears in the aspect of a celestial mansion of blazing vajras. On its outer periphery, the essential nature of the primordial wisdom of equality appears in the aspect of a celestial mansion of blazing jewels. On its outer periphery , the essential nature of the primordial wisdom of discernment appears in the aspect of a celestial mansion of blazing lotuses. On its outer periphery, the essential nature of the primordial wisdom of accomplishment appears in the aspect of a celestial mansion of blazing swastikas. On its outer periphery is a blazing mountain of primordial wisdom and a fence of a mass of fire. On its periphery is a great celestial mansion of a dark vajra-wind and razor-sharp blades. On its periphery is fence of crashing waves of a vajra-river.

Visualizing that definitely puts an end to all grahas and vighnas that arise from the projections of thoughts. That is like constructing a fence to protect one from enemies. Determining the nature of all

impure, deluded mental states and appearances, then accurately recognizing the mode of existence, or mode of being, of the ground puts a stop to misleading confusion. All non-realization and

misconceptions are a great flaw for the practice of meditation, so there is a real blessing in first gaining knowledge and realization. [209]

For that purpose, in accordance with the ways of the cycle of existence, before someone moves into a new house, one clears out all its flaws, then cleans it so that it is comfortable, beautiful, well decorated, and attractive. Likewise, with the force of your great faith, admiration, and reverence, emanate rays of light from your heart, arousing the minds of the jinas and jinaputras. Consequently, rupakayas are created from the absolute nature of reality, and all empowerments, blessings, and siddhis dissolve into you, your environment, your place of practice, and your practice substances in the aspect of mounds of five-colored lights and masses of rainbow-clouds, together with enlightened bodies in the form of subtle mudras, enlightened speech in the form of various seed-syllables, and enlightened minds in the form of various hand-symbols. As a result, repeatedly imagine your environment being blessed as the naturally appearing, real Akanista, your house as a palace created from primordial wisdom, your practice substances as ambrosia, and your body, speech, and mind to be of the nature of the three vajras. It is appropriate to actualize your place of practice, your house, your practice substances, and yourself as deities and the mandala.

The manifestation of the dharmakaya, free of the extremes of conceptual elaboration, the spontaneously present, absolute nature, and self-arisen nature of the embodiments and displays of primordial wisdom [210] is the ultimate blessing of the offerings. The natural appearances of sensory objects appearing as objects from the perspective of conventional, deluded sentient beings are sealed with the embodiments and great primordial wisdoms. Imagine that infinite clouds of offerings, including the outer seven enjoyments and the inner five sensory objects, appear in the nature of unceasing streams of displays of a

circles of ornaments in all the self-appearing mandalas of primordial wisdoms. In particular, imagine that the five poisons melt into the essential nature of the five primordial wisdoms, the medicine swirls about as an ocean of ambrosia of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness, and visualize the cosmos as a red baling torma in which the nutritive essence is synthesized, acting as a source of all desirable things. Imagine the attachment of the three realms of the cycle of existence melting into the essential nature of the bliss of detachment, appearing as a boiling ocean of great wish-fulfilling, red rakta and so forth, offered to each of the deities, and blessed with the essence of the three vajras. And imagine that the arranged objects, like illusory substances, each expresses its own mantra, like illusory mantras, such that they are of the nature of those appearances.

The projection of the offering substances is called the space-treasury samadhi. [211] Until the ego-grasping consciousness ceases, these occurrences of unbroken streams of appearances of sensory objects are transformed into clouds of offerings. As an analogy, by imprinting mantras of illusory substances upon the realm of limpid, clear sky, various appearances of sensory objects arise for the spectators. Likewise, the sensory faculties of the recipients of the offerings and gifts are like the limpid, clear sky; the substances that have been set out are like illusory substances; one's thoughts are like illusory thoughts; the recipients of the offerings and gifts are like a crowd of spectators; and all the enjoyments are visualized as if they were illusory wish-fulfilling appearances. That is illusion like samadhi.

Illusion-like samadhi does not occur merely with such visualization, rather it is within the experiential domain of people who have ascertained samsara and nirvana to be self-appearing. Know that those who do not recognize that are conceptually visualizing objects to their minds. For all of that, ultimately take as the basis the way of manifesting the awareness that is present as the ground; and

conventionally, the preliminary practices of the stage of generation are taught in accordance with the ways of the cycle of existence.

Moreover, know that the methods for proceeding along the path are taught with respect to the characteristics of the ground itself, [212] and they are not objects other than that.

Now in the main practice, before meditating on the foundation, namely, the buddha-field and palace, and those who reside in it, namely, the deities, the impure, karmic eon must be dissolved into the absolute nature and be brought forth in the appearance of pure deities of primordial wisdom. As an analogy, dream appearances and waking appearances do not both appear simultaneously; and the human realm and hell realm cannot possible emerge at the same time. Likewise, the impure appearances of the cycle of existence and the buddha-field of primordial wisdom deities cannot possibly exist simultaneously.

First, as the phenomenal inanimate universe, its inhabiting, animate sentient beings, and the appearances of the five sensory objects are all dissolved into the absolute nature as illusory apparitions, imagine that they are dissolved into the nature of emptiness. The manifestation of this mode of existence of suchness, reality-itself, is called the samadhi of suchness. Those who do not know the nature and mode of being of emptiness merely impose some kind of emptiness upon that which is not empty, and the samadhi of suchness is not directly manifested. The real samadhi of suchness is in the realm of experience solely of contemplatives who have realized the view of emptiness. [213]

Again, from the manifestation of all-pervasive primordial wisdom and the mode of being of the ground all phenomena included within samsara and nirvana manifest as displays of great spontaneous presence, like planets and stars in the ocean. That total appearance is called the samadhi of all appearances. This is in the realm of experience solely of contemplatives who have identified the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground. Others' cultivation of compassion

by mentally focusing on sentient beings entails thinking about a referent, and the actual samadhi of all appearances does not become manifest. Therefore, recognize that one is merely being substituted

for the other.

Then in an instant, like rainbows suddenly appearing in the sky where none exist, and like heavenly bodies suddenly appearing in a pool of water where none exist, from the absolute nature of all-pervasive reality-itself, free of conceptual elaboration, the visualization of awareness as a causal, white syllable om, blazing with light and light-rays causes the emergence of the entire foundational mandala and those who reside in it. The former two41 are primordial wisdoms that are aware of emptiness and that transcend the conceptual objects of the intellect. The final visualization consists of apparitions involving referents and the clarity of their presence.

O Vidyavajra, [214] as in the explanation of the gradual formation of the elements due to the wind of the eon, visualize the syllable e emerging from the om and transforming into the nature of empty, clear, all-pervasive space. Yam emerges and transforms into an air mandala as the underlying ground, in the shape of a vajra-swastika. Bam emerges and transforms into an ocean, of the nature of limpid, clear, contamination-free water, in the shape of a swirling sphere. From the emanation of lam, a vast, broad, square-shaped golden ground appears. Ram emerges and transforms into the nature of warmth in the composition of all the above, bearing the aspect of warmth and present as a semi-circle.

All those appear but do not inherently exist, like the moon in water and a rainbow. Know them to be mere appearances, empty and unreal like the expanse of space. Again, upon the golden ground of great power Sum is emanated, such that the entire ground shines like lapis-lazuli, blazing with

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41 Namely, the samadhi of suchness and the samadhi of all appearances.

limpid, clear light. It is free of all rough things such as jagged mountains, pebbles, and thorny trees. Its vast, broad surface is smooth and level like the face of a mirror, such that when pressed

down, it sinks four finger-widths, and when the pressure is removed, it springs back four finger-widths. Aromatic fragrances waft across grassy hills covered with medicinal plants. [215] The ground is completely covered with various beautiful, lovely lotus flowers, blazing, clear, shimmering, limpid in colors of deep blue, white, yellow, red, and green. The sky is criss-crossed with checkered patterns of rainbow lights, and the cardinal and intermediate directions are covered with masses of rainbow clouds. In that expanse all the assemblies of apparitional viras and yoginis of primordial wisdom perform beautiful dances, sing lovely melodies and play various musical instruments. In the intervening space various offering goddesses present myriads of clouds of offerings and make obeisance. In the eight cardinal and intermediate directions of the ground are eight great oceans. On their shores are jewel-pebbles, golden sand, and lush turquoise meadows.

There dwells an inconceivable variety of innumerable, sweet-voiced birds including the golden goose, who is the king of birds, blue-headed wild ducks, katika birds, talking parrots, cuckoos, pheasants, [216] hazel hens, and sparrows. The attractive birds include ducks, eagles, hoopoes, celestial birds with voices like chiming bells, and kritipa birds having the form of golden vajras. They are white like the color of a conch and of silver, yellow like the color of gold and amber, red like the color of coral and ruby, green like the color of turquoise and emerald, dark blue like the color of lapis-lazuli and sapphire, and blue like the color of vairata. Those and other birds are of pleasing colors and beautiful forms, singing lovely songs, engaging in charming play, alighting upon wish-fulfilling trees, and circling about in the ocean.

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In addition, various apparitional, beautifully formed deer show their dexterity in enchanting, lovely play, and they listen to the Dharma. In the center is a pond of ambrosial water endowed with eight qualities surrounded by a swirling moat and encircled by a metal fence composed of seven types of precious substances. By drinking it thirst and hunger are dispelled, and merely by experiencing the water's aroma, [217] all pains of various illnesses are removed and untainted bliss is produced.

In its center is a wonderful garden, free of any kind of discord, in the center of which is a hum. From this emerges a palace. Its eastern face is white and luminous like crystal, symbolizing mirror-like primordial wisdom; its southern face is golden yellow, symbolizing the primordial wisdom of equality; its western face is ruby-red, symbolizing the primordial wisdom of discernment; its northern face is sapphire-green,42 symbolizing the primordial wisdom of accomplishment; and its center is the blue of lapis-lazuli, symbolizing the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality.

On its eastern side is a circular door of great compassion, symbolizing the spontaneous enlightened activity of pacification; on its southern side is a square door of great loving kindness, symbolizing the spontaneous enlightened activity of increase; on its western side is a semi-circular door of great empathetic joy, symbolizing the spontaneous enlightened activity of power; and on its northern side is a triangular door of great equanimity, symbolizing the spontaneous enlightened activity of ferocity .

It has four comers symbolizing the four embodiments. On the outside it is surrounded by protective celestial mansions of the five primordial wisdoms and the five spontaneously present embodiments. On top of the palace are vase-platforms, vases, awnings, [218] wheels of Dharma, fine parasols, top-ornaments

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42 One would expect this to be emerald-green, but the text reads "sapphire."

of the sun, moon, and a jewel, laced curtains, bells, and spherical bells from which sounds of Dharma are produced. The jeweled door frames, portals, and steps and so forth are adorned with immeasurable, palatial qualities. On the four sides the light from the sun and moon through the windows strikes the crystal windowpanes, covering them with rainbows and orbs during the daytime and with clear light during the nighttime. The mere sight of this is enchanting, and simply by entering within, displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms become manifest.

In the center of the palace is a jeweled throne of great height and beauty, symbolizing transcendence beyond mundane existence. It is held up by eight lions, symbolizing the purity of the eight collections of consciousness, and upon it descends a white, causal seed-syllable om from which rays of light radiate upwards. They make immeasurable offerings to all the jinas and jinaputras. Fully arousing the mind-streams of the chosen deities, all the empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of their bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities, together with all the qualities of their primordial wisdom of knowledge, mercy, and power, are drawn in like a convergence of rainbow clouds; and they dissolve into the om. Rays of light radiate downwards, purifying the mind-streams of all sentient beings of the three realms, and, as if forcefully arousing them from sleep, bringing them to a state in which there is no delusion. [219] At the same time as the rays of light are retracted, the life and merit of all sentient beings and all the splendor and vital essence of the animate and inanimate universe are retracted and dissolve into the om.

The om transforms into oneself as the great Bhagavan Vairocana, whose body is white in color like a snow-mountain, symbolizing his freedom from the taints of habitual propensities. He has one face, symbolizing the sole bindu of the dharmakaya. His right eye symbolizes the primordial wisdom of knowing reality

as it is, and his left eye symbolizes the primordial wisdom of seeing the full range of phenomena. His right ear symbolizes ultimate reality, and his left ear symbolizes conventional reality .His right nostril symbolizes the dharmakaya for his own sake, and his left nostril symbolizes the rupakaya for the sake of others. His mouth symbolizes the great bliss of equality, his teeth symbolize the perfection of the mandala of pacification, and his tongue symbolizes the even union of samsara and nirvana. His right arm symbolizes the skillful means of great bliss, and his left arm symbolizes the wisdom of great emptiness. The ten fingers of his hands symbolize the five embodiments and the five primordial wisdoms. His right leg symbolizes his not abiding in the extreme of mundane existence, and his left leg symbolizes his not abiding in the extreme of peace. [220] His ten toes symbolize the perfection of the five buddha classes and

five consorts. His twelve joints, which are pliant and flexible like the branches of a vine, symbolize the purification of the twelve links of dependent origination. His entire body symbolizes his spontaneous qualities. His body hair, blazing with the light of primordial wisdom, symbolizes the 84,000 collections of the Dharma. The hair of his head, tied in a bun, symbolizes his never having been subject to delusion. The dangling locks of his hair flowing down his back symbolize his caring for animate beings. His legs crossed in the vajra-position symbolize that he is unmoved throughout the three times. His two hands in the mudra of supreme Awakening43 symbolize that samsara and nirvana are displays of great Awakening. The thousand-spoked, golden wheel that he holds symbolizes the perfection of the circle of primordial wisdom of the minds of all the jinas of the three times. All the Sambhoga apparel with which he is adorned symbolize his love for animate beings. The light and rainbows that surround him symbolize his perfection of all the embodiments and primordial wisdoms.

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43 This mudra is one in which the hands touch at the fingertips, with the palms facing up.

In the east the buddha-field called Abhirati the entire ground appears like precious crystal. In the south the buddha-field called Srimat the entire ground appears in the aspect of gold. [221] In the west the buddha-field called Sukhavati the entire ground appears in the aspect of ruby. In the north the buddha-field called Karmaprapurana appears with blazing light in the aspect of sapphire.

In the east the Tathagata Aksobhyavajra arises from hum, the blue-black color of his body symbolizing the unborn absolute nature of reality. He presses upon the ground, blocking the entrance to the three realms, and he holds a vajra symbolizing indestructible ultimate reality. In the south Ratnasambhava arises from tram, the yellow color of his body symbolizing his perfection of excellent qualities and enjoyments. The mudra of supreme generosity symbolizes his bestowal of supreme, eternal joy to all animate beings, and he holds a precious jewel symbolizing his bestowal of

the glory of service and joy to all pitiable animate beings. In the west Amitabha arises from hrih, the red color of his body symbolizing his mastery over the whole of samsara and nirvana. His two hands in the mudra of meditative equipoise symbolize the display of samsara and nirvana as great pure equality; and upon them the lotus he holds symbolizes the complete expansion of the mystery of the Awakened mind, great bliss. In the north Amoghasiddhi arises from ah, the green color of his body symbolizing [222] his synthesis and perfection of all the circles of ornaments of the embodiments, primordial wisdoms, excellent qualities, and inexhaustible enlightened activities. His mudra of giving is the great protection of fearlessness for animate beings, and he holds a variegated vajra symbolizing his training of disciples by means of the four kinds of enlightened activities.

Whichever one of those deities you take as your principle being to be actualized, imagine and actualize the set of five for each one. Know that this

symbolizes implicitly the simultaneous perfection of the five embodiments and the five primordial wisdoms in the dharmakaya, the sugatagarbha.

Thus, all the imagined deities are embodiments that appear but do not inherently exist, like rainbows in the sky, like the forms of the moon in water, like reflections in a mirror, and like limpid, clear water, purified of all contamination. In the absolute nature all the embodiments and buddha- fields of all the jinas naturally arise like bright heavenly bodies in the ocean, and they are visualized in the aspect of masses of light.

Likewise, with respect to the wrathful mandala, the animate and inanimate universe, together with one's own body, aggregates, elements, and sense-bases disappear into the realm of space, the great emptiness of reality-itself, like a dream vanishing into the absolute nature. Then rest in mastery of the primordial wisdom of emptiness. [223] Once again rest in meditative equipoise in a state in which clear, primordial wisdom becomes manifest. At the end visualize awareness as a causal, flaming, blue-black syllable hum,

which is an apparition of the primordial wisdom of great all-pervasive compassion. When you encounter the mundane dying process, which is to be purified, the outer appearances of the inanimate universe, the inner, animate sentient beings, and all the intermediate appearances of the five sensory objects dissolve into clear emptiness. Then expansively resting in that for awhile is the phase of the dissolution of mundane existence into the total-ground. By taking as the path the great, absolute nature of the ground-emptiness, which is the purifier that will be recognized at the time of the fruition, you will gain mastery of reality-itself, suchness. Thus, familiarization in this is of the utmost importance.

When the dying process that is to be purified is transferred to the clear light, this is like the condition of the autumn sky when it is not veiled in white by the contaminating condition of the sun, nor veiled in black by darkness, and

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when it is not contaminated by clouds, mist, or wind. Then self-awareness, limpid, clear, and free of contamination, is nowhere limited in its dimensions. Without veering in any direction, you come to the attainment of pervasiveness free of all extremes of conceptual elaboration. Then the purifying clear light of the time of the path, the primordial wisdom of awareness, identifies itself; and by the power of that familiarization, [224] at the time of fruition the inner depths are reached within yourself, resulting in Awakening as the dharmakaya.

If you do not have the ability to be liberated in that way, the appearance of the ground clear light which is grasped as the body to which you are experientially fixated is the basis to be purified; and by arousing purifying awareness as the causal syllable, gradually bring forth the appearance of a buddha-field. By so doing, the manifest presentation of the fruition will come to you. Therefore, know that it is of the utmost importance to familiarize yourself with the three types of samadhi from now on. The clear light emptiness that is present as the ground does not become manifest merely by thinking and visualizing, so know that the result of that is nothing more than that.

Again dark blue light in the form of e is emitted from the appearance of the causal syllable in the foundationless domain of the primordial ground, emptiness. That transforms into the nature of limpid, clear space, and green light in the form of Yam is emitted, manifesting as the mandala of air. Red light in the form of ra is emitted, manifesting as an ocean of blood completely covered with waves. Kem is emitted, forming a triangular mountain of skeletons, equal in dimensions with the absolute nature of reality. Ram is emitted, becoming the nature of a violently flaming, dark red cosmic volcano billowing masses of fire. [225] Sum is emitted, appearing as dark blue light from which emerges a lapis-lazuli-colored ground, clear as crystal. Beneath it a kila-shaped mountain appears without obscuration. Outside is a blazing expanse of a roaring mass of fire of

primordial wisdom, resounding like the conflagration at the end of the eon. Within that expanse a bhrum emerges, transforming into a ferocious palace with its exterior composed of various precious substances, its interior composed of three types of skulls, with dry skulls forming the ceiling, old skulls with dry flesh and skin forming the edges of the ceiling, and fresh skulls dripping with blood forming the walls. Those are all held in place with nails of meteorite.

The ceiling symbolizes the dharmakaya, the edges of the ceiling symbolize the sambhogakaya, and the walls symbolize the nirmanakaya. The meteorite nails are symbols of the ultimate Spirit of Awakening. The roof is made of human skin upon which victory banners of human corpses are hoisted. The bases of the pillars are the eight great nagas, the pillars are the eight great devas, the tops of the pillars are the eight great planets, the directional guardians and bhimas are the criss-crossing beams, the constellations are displayed as the ceiling beams, and above, below, and in all directions blood slowly drips from ornamental strings of heads of large and small rudras. [226] The entire surroundings are covered with human corpses and the corpses of horses emerging from bubbles in a swirling ocean of blood. The entire environment outside roars with a violent, fiery wind, like a hail storm, and countless substances of black magic, weapons, and their wielders, with the naturally emitted sounds of ferocious mantras such as hum hum phat phat bellowing forth like a thousand rolls of thunder. Everywhere outside of that are many spontaneously present, confounding mandalas of wrathful male and female beings, including the eight great charnel grounds, the ten abodes of Heruka, and the twenty-four sites. There all the guardians of the doctrine, Dharma protectors, local guardians, and treasure-masters devour for their food the warm flesh and blood of the malevolent enemies of the doctrine; and as for their tasks, they take away the breath of life of the ten fields, and they guard the doctrine of the Buddha. They proudly display terrifying forms and

emit sounds of killing and dismembering. Brandishing sharp weapons and rough instruments, they display beautiful apparitions and take wrathful delight in acts of killing. With their minds

unmoved from the peaceful state of reality-itself, they serve the needs of animate beings by subduing others with compassion. All of them are none other than emanations of the great universal splendor. [227] In short, all these myriads of haughty , terrifying beings surround the palace, without any space between them, in the manner of kings, ministers, and the general populace. Imagine that they are encircled outside by nine concentric wheels of protection.

In the center of that terrifying, ferocious palace is an eight-spoked wheel of meteorite, symbolizing the purification of the eight objects of consciousness. In its center are eight kings of beasts, symbolizing the purification of the eight collections of consciousness, supporting a vast, lofty throne of precious substances, symbolizing utter transcendence beyond mundane existence. Upon it is a lotus, symbolizing the great center, emptiness, and detachment towards the cycle of existence; a moon symbolizing the skillful means of great bliss, the element of the white bindu, and the lack of contamination by the flaws of the cycle of existence; a sun symbolizing the wisdom of great emptiness, the element of red rakta, and the perfection of all excellent qualities; and a seat of male and female corpses symbolizing the dissolution of self-concepts into the absolute nature and the equality of nonconceptuality. From the absolute nature a blue- black syllable hum descends upon that seat. Emanating rays of light upwards, immeasurable, pleasing offerings are made to all the jinas and jinaputras of the three times. Arousing their mind-streams, [228] all the empowerments and blessings of the circles of ornaments of all their inexhaustible bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities are drawn in like a convergence of masses of light and rainbow clouds; and they dissolve into the hum. Then rays of

light are emitted downwards, utterly purifying all the vices, obscurations, habitual propensities, karma, mental afflictions, and suffering of all sentient beings in the three realms. Like vigorously arousing them from sleep, they are liberated into the absolute nature in which delusion is unknown. At the same time as the rays of light are retracted, imagine that all the life-force, merit, radiance, and splendor of all sentient beings, as well as the vital essence of the four elements and all glorious qualities, converge in the form of a five-

colored mass of light and dissolve into the hum.

The syllable hum transforms into awareness as the causal Heruka, whose body is blue-black in color, holding a vajra in his right hand and a skull filled with blood in his left. His naked body, devoid of clothing and ornaments, stands in an expanse of a blazing mass of fire of primordial wisdom, with his two legs positioned in a wrathful posture. From the three points of his body rays of light are emitted and then draw in every single one of the mandalas of the three embodiments of the jinas in the form of white, red, and deep blue rays of light. Imagine that they dissolve into your own three points, generating great power and strength. [229]

In an instant you then transform into the great universal splendor, and the supreme basis of emanation of all wrathful beings--Heruka--the blue-black color of his body symbolizing the immutable, absolute nature of reality, free of conceptual elaboration. His blue-black, central face symbolizes the dharmakaya, the empty , originally pure, essential nature; his white, right face symbolizes the sambhogakaya, the clear, spontaneously present nature; and his flaming, dark red, left face symbolizes the nirmanakaya, all-pervasive compassion. His central eye is a symbol of the primordial wisdom of emptiness; his right eye is a symbol of the primordial wisdom of clarity; and his left eye is a symbol of all-pervasive primordial wisdom. His two ears symbolize the two truths. His nose

symbolizes the two goals. His frown symbolizes all the paths and fruitions. His mouth symbolizes the great bliss of equality. His tongue symbolizes liberation in the equality of samsara and nirvana. The rows of his teeth, white like snow mountains, symbolize the mandala of the absolute nature of the blood-drinking vajra. His four, bared fangs symbolize the subduing of animate beings by means of the Four Immeasurables. His orange hair flaming upwards symbolizes the primordial absence of delusion. His eyebrows flashing like a thousand bolts of lightning symbolize the elimination of the realm of darkness of ignorance and the manifestation of the illumination of primordial wisdom. [230] His flaming mustache and beard, emitting fiery sparks, symbolize the blazing of the great

creative expressions of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness. His six arms symbolize the six syllables, and his first right hand holds a nine-pointed vajra symbolizing the sequence of nine yanas and the nine grounds; his middle right hand holds a five-pointed vajra symbolizing the five embodiments and the five primordial wisdoms; and his bottom right hand holds a three-pointed vajra symbolizing the three embodiments and the three primordial wisdoms. His first left hand holds a dry bhandha filled with blood, symbolizing the cycle of existence of the formless realm displayed as blood; the middle left hand holds a bhandha covered with blood and skin, filled with blood and symbolizing the cycle of existence of the form realm displayed as blood; and his bottom left hand holds a bhandha with braided hair, filled with blood and symbolizing the cycle of existence of the desire realm displayed as blood. His four legs are wrathfully spread wide apart, symbolizing his possession of the four foundations of supernormal abilities. The wings of the garuda, flaming with vajra jewels, are outstretched to his right and left, symbolizing his victory over the three realms and his venturing without impediment into the absolute nature of reality-itself. He has a charnel ground and all glorious apparel symbolizing the arising of the

objects of consciousness as ornaments. He stands [231] amidst a blazing mass of fire like the cosmic conflagration at the end of the eon, symbolizing the incineration of the false conceptions of ignorance by great, primordial wisdom. Above him hovers a black garuda symbolizing delusion displaying itself as wisdom. Samantabhadra and his consort reside on his crown as the Lords of buddha classes, symbolizing his never wavering from the state of peace of the dharmakaya.

The universal splendor arises as the display of Heruka symbolizing the skillful means of great bliss, and he embraces the pale blue body of his consort Akasamukhi, who symbolizes the wisdom of great emptiness. Her right hand holds a khatranka that cuts off the three poisons, and her left hand holds a skull filled with blood, which bestows the three realms as blood. Her left leg embraces the waist of her consort, symbolizing the union of bliss and emptiness, and her right leg presses on the heart of a corpse, symbolizing the closing of

the door on the cycle of existence of the three realms.

As a sign of lust arising as an ornament, she wears, an upper garment of human skin; as a sign of hatred arising as an ornament, she is adorned with garlands of snakes and human heads; as a sign of delusion arising as an ornament, she wears a moist leopard skin as a lower garment; as a sign of holding the three worlds with compassion, strands of her dark red hair flow down her back. His vajra enters the womb of her lotus, symbolizing the union of bliss and emptiness. [232]

The natural luster of mirror-like primordial wisdom arises as the white hatred-vajra in the east; the natural luster of the primordial wisdom of equality arises as the yellow pride-vajra in the south; the natural luster of the primordial wisdom of discernment arises as the red attachment-vajra in the west; and the

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natural luster of the primordial wisdom of accomplishment arises as the dark green pride-vajra in the north.

On the crown of the majestic chosen deities imagine a thousand-spoked wheel of Dharma. At its center is a white om, white and radiant like an autumnal moon. At their throats is an eight-petalled lotus, at the center of which is a red syllable ah, more radiant than a hundred thousand suns. At their hearts is an erect, nine-pointed, meteorite vajra, at the center of which is a sun-seat. On that is a blue-black syllable hum, radiant like a lapis-lazuli mountain drenched in the light of a hundred thousand suns. From those syllables are emitted white, red, and deep blue rays of light, arousing the mind-streams of all the jinas and jinaputras of the ten directions and the four times. From the absolute nature of reality rupakayas emerge in the forms of the five classes of sugatas. They are invited into the space in front, and they empower you with the vase water, filling your body from the crown of your head. All the stains of afflictive and cognitive obscurations are totally purified, and the vajra-essences enter their three points, [233] sealing them with the three vajras. You are appointed as the regent of the jinas and empowered to liberate the whole cycle of existence of the three realms. The excess water spills over, crowning your head with the

five classes of buddhas who abide as the principle lords of the buddha classes.

Again the essential nature of nondual emptiness and bliss of the deities, in the form of a white and red mass of light, dissolves into yourself, and imagine that this brings forth the power and strength to dominate' the whole of samsara and nirvana. White, red, and deep blue rays of light are emitted from your own three points, inviting from the domain of the space-treasury of reality-itself all the jinas and jinaputras of the four times and the ten directions, displayed as the foundational mandala and the beings who reside in it. Converging upon you like a blizzard, repeatedly imagine that they nondually dissolve into you and your

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implements of practice like snow falling into a great lake. Invite them in that way.

Then they proceed into the sky above you and the mandala where all the jinas are offered seats in accordance with their own minds.[44] As soon as the seats are offered, the deities dissolve into those in front of you, and imagine that they each sit on their own seats. In that way request them to remain.

From all the places where you have visualized yourself as your chosen deities [234] corporeal beings are emanated, equal in number to the atoms of the earth. They bow before the deities, and between their two, pressed palms are precious jewels from which are emitted myriads of clouds of offerings. By making immeasurable offerings to please their bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities, their mind-streams are pleased and satisfied. Immeasurable rays of light are emitted from their bodies, utterly purifying all vices and obscurations, and transforming everyone into displays of the chosen deities. Imagine that they dissolve into your own heart as the imagined deity, bringing forth majestic power. That is the homage.

The offering water cools their bodies; the water for bathing the feet cools their feet; flowers are offered at their seats; incense pervades the area with a fragrant aroma; clear illumination removes the obscurations so that the objects of the mind are limpid and clear;

fragrantly scented water pervades all their accouterments and their bodies; and various foods satisfy their gustatory faculties; the sounds of various kinds of lovely music are offered, which satisfy their minds with the taste of bliss and emptiness. Beautiful, satisfying goddesses of form make offerings pleasing to the eyes, and they dissolve into their visual faculties; [235] goddesses of sound bearing lovely sounds make offerings pleasing to the ear, and they dissolve into their audial faculties; goddesses of

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44 That is, seats symbolic of ferocity are offered to wrathful deities, peaceful seats are offered to peaceful deities, and so on.

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smell bearing delicious fragrances make offerings pleasing to the nose, and they dissolve into their olfactory faculties; goddesses of taste bearing various foods make offerings pleasing to the tongue, and they dissolve into their gustatory faculties; goddesses of touch bearing garments make offerings pleasing to the deities' bodies, and they dissolve into their tactile faculties satisfying their minds with the taste of bliss and emptiness. Those visualizations are the outer and inner offerings.

The five poisons are transformed into the ambrosia of primordial wisdom and are offered; the animate and inanimate universe is transformed into displays of tormas and is offered; the cycle of existence is transformed into an ocean of blood and is offered; appearances and emptiness-the union of the deity and consort-are offered as the uncontaminated, great bliss of union; and the vajra of skillful means-the primordial being of reality-itself-delivers the rudras of self concepts of the three realms into the domain of the wisdom of identitylessness, and ordinary appearances of objects are transformed into mountains of flesh, oceans of blood, and piles of bones, and are offered. Thus, all appearances of phenomena are destroyed in great, intellect-transcending reality-itself; and that is the offering of deliverance.

Again [236] mentally visualize all the colors of the bodies, hand-symbols, ornaments, and garments of all the deities of the mandala, and as you recall their great qualities, imagine that you project from

your body innumerable viras and dakinis who perform beautiful dances in the sky, sound various musical instruments held in their hands, and make offerings of lovely songs of praise. That is the visualization of praise. Such meditation simply involving visualized imagery is indispensable. Practicing without even that is no more meaningful than the chirping of birds, and no siddhis will arise, just as no butter emerges from churning water.

In terms of ultimate reality, by establishing the meaning of emptiness, all appearances and mental states of the cycle of existence are transformed into the best, unsurpassed method of identifying the self-nature of Samantabhadra, the supreme deity who dwells as the ground, the nature of emptiness. In terms of conventional reality, the method is to meditate on and visualize one's body, speech, and mind as the three vajras.

In the past, due to the obscuration of the habitual propensities of karma and mental afflictions, the deity who dwells as the ground has not manifested, but has been reduced to a vacuity that is an ethically neutral immateriality. Now by manifesting the faculty of wisdom that realizes identitylessness, [237] primordial wisdom free of grasping onto clarity and emptiness becomes manifest, and that is ultimate reality. Visualizing the samayasattvas as if they were tangible, inviting the primordial wisdom deities from the absolute nature, and merging them indivisibly is conventional reality. Inviting them from one place to another is something that is not established in reality; rather it is merely posited by the intellect as existing.

Identifying awareness that is present as the ground, dharmakaya, and stabilizing that in one's mind-stream is ultimate; imagining the deities as remaining due to requesting them to sit on their prepared seats is conventional. Delight due to one's belief in the manifestations of the displays of self-appearing, primordial wisdom is called the homage of encountering the view. In that the one making homage and all the many objects of homage are of one taste; they are not different, and that is ultimate. Conventionally, in accordance with the ways of the cycle of existence, one makes reverent homage according to the custom of showing reverent homage to kings and so on; and that is conventional. When one sees

the mode of existence of the Great Perfection, reality-itself, one knows that all sensory objects that appear in the world are not prepared, but are self

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arising offerings; and that is ultimate. illusory prepared substances, illusion-like increasing mantras, [238] illusory visualizations, and the projections of illusion like, attractive objects to the senses of appearances of deities, who are like the audience, are conventional offerings. The wondrous perception of the nature and qualities of the reality that is present as the ground-dharmakaya is ultimate; praising the great qualities of the deities in the manner of praising and extolling great people such as kings is conventional.

Knowing that in reality the ground dharmakaya is totally present in oneself is the essential nature of the view of the Great Perfection, so recognize that attending single-pointedly to the manifest nature of awareness is of the utmost importance.

When you visualize the deity in that way, stabilize your pride with the knowledge that you are the deity. Previously when you were wandering in the cycle of existence, the latent consciousness that grasped onto the appearance of sentient beings' bodies as yourself was pride. As the agent of all appearances and mental states, visualize your own body as a deity in that manner. The unceasing consciousness itself that grasps onto the appearance of sentient beings' bodies as I is exchanged for the consciousness of the deity. Practicing with the unceasing consciousness of yourself as the deity is called the stabilization of divine pride and divine samadhi. In doing this practice, if you disengage from this crucial point of transferring your self-appearance to that of the deity, [239] no matter how you practice, the deity will not be actualized.

If you achieve stability in divine pride in this way, finally when you identify awareness, you will have already achieved stability in awareness for yourself; so that will propel you towards the state of liberation. Training in bringing forth clear appearances by vividly imagining the color of the deity's body, together with the hand-symbols, ornaments, and garments, is to make

them manifest, just as the appearances of your own aggregates, elements, and sense-bases appear clearly and firmly due to conceptual projections. By visualizing the divine field and the deities themselves again and again and nurturing that, the ground of firm pride is maintained. Know that to be of the utmost importance for actualizing the deity.

From the primordial protector, the dharmakaya, down to all the maras and rudras, not a single being exists as anything other than your own appearances. Fathoming that with certainty is the way to avoid the error of reifying the stage of generation, and it is a special, profound point for actualizing the deity as primordial wisdom. For yogins who realize that samsara and nirvana are none other than their own appearances, even if they practice meditating on pisacas, raksasas, and [240] and theurangs, those are seen to be nothing other than emanations of Samantabhadra. So apart from primordial wisdom beings, there is not a single mundane being among them; for they are all enlightened displays of Samantabhadra.

Without realizing that, those who grasp onto themselves as themselves, onto others and others, onto deities as deities, and onto demons as demons will err by becoming gods of the form realm if they meditate on peaceful deities; and if they meditate on wrathful ones, they will become maras and raksasas. Even if they meditate on primordial wisdom beings, they will definitely remain as mundane beings. Why? Due to the power of ignorance they are deluded with respect to dualistic grasping; for ignorance refers to ignorance of the mode of being of the ground. Knowledge refers to awareness of the mode of being of the ground. Due to the power of ignorance, all the deities on which one meditates are actualized as sentient beings, so they are only mundane. Due to the power of knowledge, all the deities on which one meditates are actualized as primordial wisdom. By realizing that the whole of samsara and nirvana consists

of nothing other than displays of Samantabhadra, they all definitely arise as primordial wisdom beings, without even an iota of any mundane being.45

At the hearts of the deities visualized in that way imagine a jnanasattva on a lotus and sun seat, at whose heart is a sun. [241] Upon that is a nine-pointed, meteorite vajra standing upright. At its center is a blue-black hum, the color of lapis-lazuli, in the center of an enclosing sun and moon, with a mantra-string encircling it. Direct your consciousness to the hum and recite; and direct your consciousness to the bindu and nada of the hum and recite. That is called propitiating the deity. Imagine that the mantras rise above the seat and encircle it, and recite. That is called close propitiation.

At that time vast rays of light emanate forth, inviting the entire assembly of all the victorious buddhas, bodhisattvas, gurus, chosen deities, viras and dakinis of the ten directions without exception. Imagine again and again that they dissolve into the beings in front of you, and recite. Direct your consciousness to all the deities, and recite. Direct your consciousness to the circular mantras at their hearts and recite. Alternately direct your consciousness to the hum on the crescent moon, the bindu, and nada. Like sending forth messengers of the king, the crucial aspects of propitiation are inviting all the jinas and jinaputras with rays of light, having them repeatedly dissolve, and supplicating the deities.

Rays of light revolving from the mouths down to the genitals of the deities and consorts in front of you [242] gather in a mass of five-colored light all empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of all the jinas and jinaputras of the three times. Imagine

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45 In the above paragraph, the Tibetan term rig pa (Skt. vidya) translated here as "knowledge," is the same term as that translated as "awareness," and the Tibetan ma rig pa (Skt. avidya) translated here is ignorance, might also be translated as "non-awareness."

46 In this visualization, the mantras and light at the heart of the male deity rise to his mouth and move to the mouth of his consort. From there, they move down to her genital region, proceed to the genital region of the male deity, and cycle back up to his mouth, where they continue this revolution. As the light rays and mantras follow this circuit, imagine that the sound of the mantras goes with them.

again and again that they dissolve into you and your implements of practice. That is a crucial aspect of the practice, and it is a symbol of acquiring and accumulating pleasures and wealth.

Again immeasurable rays of light are emitted from the mantra-string at your heart, and, like sunlight striking drops of dew, they completely purify all the vices, obscurations, karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities in the mind-streams of all sentient beings in the three realms. Then all appearances are transformed into the nature of buddha-fields and palaces, and all mundane beings are transformed into the nature of male and female deities. With one voice and with the one taste of their minds they chant in majestic union the sounds of mantras, like the sound of a beehive when it is being destroyed. As a result, imagine that all the realms of the universe shake and tremble. That is a great practice.

Then even if you have many different things to do, visualize the four kinds of activities as follows: in the morning during the time of pacification, [243] imagine that immeasurable rays of white light are emitted to the ten directions from the mantra-strings in the hearts of the beings in front of you, making offerings pleasing to all the jinas and jinaputras, and arousing their mind-streams. All the empowerments, blessings, siddhis, primordial wisdoms, and qualities of the circles of ornaments of their inexhaustible bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities are gathered back in the form of a white mass of light, which dissolves into yourself and those created in front of you. As a result, imagine you have attained all the empowerments, siddhis, and powers of pacification. Again an immeasurable mass of white light is emanated to the abodes of the six classes of animate beings, totally purifying all the vices, obscurations, habitual propensities, karma, mental afflictions, and suffering of all sentient beings in the three realms; and imagine that they all become solely

embodiments of primordial wisdom deities. That is the visualization of pacification.

In the afternoon during the time of increase, imagine that

immeasurable rays of yellow-colored light are emitted. In the form of a mass of yellow light retract the vital essence and nutriment of the four elements, the vitality and merit of all sentient beings in the three realms, all the empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of the jinas and jinaputras of the three times, and all the vitality, merit, and power of all the deities, vidyadharas, risis, [244] and siddhas; and that dissolves into yourself. That is the visualization of increase.

In the evening during the time of power, imagine that immeasurable rays of red light, like the color of ruby, are emitted, drawing in all the jinas and jinaputras of the ten directions and the four times in the form of red light. This dissolves into yourself, and subjugates all the gods, demons, humans, all male and female humans, and every single one of the eight classes of haughty non-human beings. They are brought in front of you, where all the mighty power of all these terribly ferocious beings is overwhelmed. Then imagine that the vitality in their hearts is coughed up from their mouths as they solemnly swear to be your servants and slaves; and they dissolve into the soles of your feet. Again rays of dark red light are emitted from the hearts of the beings in front of you, placing a half vajra on the tops of the heads of all those haughty beings, signifying that they must not transgress their pledge. If they abide by their oath, and engage in enlightened activities, this will protect them from danger, and become a crown-jewel for all their needs and desires. If they transgress their word and oath, it will turn into a meteorite lightning bolt [245] that will shatter their heads into small pieces; and it will become a black, iron scorpion that will revel in their heart's blood and torment them. This meditation on their

accomplishing enlightened activities without transgressing their oath is the visualization of power.

At dusk during the time of ferocity, visualize yourself as the deity and imagine various weapons and sorcerer's substances being emanated from your body like a violent hail storm, expelling and dismembering all malevolent material and immaterial enemies and malevolent beings, like water extinguishing sparks of fire. Then innumerable small wrathful beings, iron scorpions, and garudas are

emanated, totally devouring the mound of their flesh, blood, and bones, incinerating them in a blazing ball of fire, and dispersing them with a razor-wind, such that not even a trace of them remains. Then imagining that their consciousnesses are delivered to a realm in which delusion is unknown is the visualization of ferocity.

Occasionally imagine immeasurable rays of light being emitted and then retracting in the form of a mass of light, like billowing rainbow clouds, all the empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of all the jinas and jinaputras of the three times; and repeatedly visualize that dissolving into yourself and your implements of practice. Then immeasurable rays of light emanate from [246] your heart, striking the hearts of the jinas and jinaputras. All the jinas are connected to you with a strand of light rays, and all the nonconceptual, primordial wisdoms in their mind-streams are transferred to your own mind-stream. Without letting your consciousness be distracted elsewhere, recite the mantras without interrupting them with human words; and diligently apply yourself to practice without letting your meditation cushion grow cold.

All appearances are displays of your chosen deity; all sounds are empty sounds of the nature of mantras; all thoughts are displays of the reality-itself of the enlightened mind. Transforming them into the path in that manner

constitutes the three kinds of transformation, and they are indispensable on the path of Mahayoga. Stabilizing them in the ultimate nature of awareness is propitiation, and enhancing them by means of one's conduct is practice; and that is the essential nature of the contemplative practice. Training in mentally visualizing in that manner is called conventional and provisional. Skill in the transformations of emitting and withdrawing rays of light is the most important, quintessential point of the practice, so hold onto that as the most crucial thing to know.

Establishing samsara and nirvana as great emptiness is the vase empowerment. Recognizing precious, spontaneous presence as the self-arisen embodiments and primordial wisdom is the secret

empowerment. [247] Manifesting awareness, the nonconceptual, primordial wisdom of reality-itself, is the wisdom empowerment. Mastering the fruition in oneself is called the word empowerment. Those are the real four empowerments, devoid of a bestower and a recipient.

Visualizing your body as the deity is the body vase empowerment; expressing your speech as the mantra is the speech secret empowerment; letting your mind be inseparable from the inner depths of primordial wisdom is the mind wisdom-gnosis empowerment; and the realization of the nonduality of deity and your own appearance is the word empowerment. Just that is the simultaneous perfection of the four empowerments.

Clinging to the true existence of the entire animate and inanimate universe, with its three realms and all its sensory objects, deluded sentient beings grasp onto objects as being substantial. Ascertaining all those external appearances to be displays of reality-itself, suchness, is called the assembly of the three realms displayed as the enlightened body, speech and mind As for confession, ignorance of the ultimate is called sin, or a habitual propensity, and obscurations are

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so called because they obscure the self-nature of the ground. In reality, not even the slightest trace of so-called sins, obscurations, or habitual propensities exist, so what method could there be for confessing them? Determining the meaning of the two kinds of identitylessness, [248] then realizing the mode of existence of the ground is called confession and purification. As a substitute for that, confession with one's mind, confession with material goods, and confession by uttering words are methods for averting obstacles to one's spiritual practice, and they are taught as intermediate confessions.

In that regard, there is no better way to perfect the accumulations [of merit and knowledge] than by engaging in the ganacakra of transforming one's food and drink into the path by visualizing one's body as the mandala of the jinas, one's food and drink as the ganacakra, and one fingers as offering goddesses.

For the offering of the ganacakra, to enhance your times of practice and your experiential realization, you offer the entire universe with all its sensory objects, recognizing that as not something prepared, but as a self-arisen ganacakra. A single syllable ram is emitted from your heart as your chosen deity. Flames burst forth from it, incinerating all the stains of the habitual propensities of conceptual grasping onto real existence. The syllable yam is emitted, setting the air in motion, casting out all the pollution and contaminations of impurities. The syllable kham is emitted, giving rise to water, which dissolves things into emptiness, then merges them with the absolute nature of the animate and inanimate universe and disperses them.

Again imagine the syllable a emerging from the absolute nature and transforming into a kapala of primordial wisdom as vast as the absolute nature of reality .[249] It is white on the outside, red on the inside, and rests on the surface of a stove with wind and fire beneath it. Inside of it in the center and the four cardinal directions all the three realms of the animate and inanimate cosmos

transform into a mountain of human flesh in the center, a mountain of elephant flesh in the east, a mountain of horse flesh in the south, a mountain of peacock flesh in the west, and a mountain of pheasant flesh in the north. Visualize them all as vast in breadth and height, oily, impressive, lustrous, powerful, and filled with vitality.

Again imagine a mountain of excrement in the center, an ocean of urine in the southeast, bone marrow in the southwest, white and red bodhicitta in the northwest, and a swirling ocean of various kinds of blood in the northeast.

A white om dissolves into the human flesh, melting it into ambrosia of the enlightened body. A blue-black hum dissolves into the g;reat flesh in the east, melting it into ambrosia of the enlightened mind. A yellow tram dissolves into the great flesh in the south, melting it into the ambrosia of excellent qualities. A red hrih dissolves into the great flesh in the west, melting it into ambrosia of enlightened speech. A green a dissolves into the great flesh in the north, melting it into ambrosia of enlightened activities, and they take on the colors of white, blue, yellow, red, and green respectively.

A blue mum dissolves into the excrement; a white mam dissolves into the urine; [250] a yellow lam dissolves into the bone marrow; a red pam dissolves into the bodhicitta; and a green tam dissolves into the rakta, endowing them with the power and vital essence of the five primordial wisdoms.

From beneath, the air is moved due to yam, and fire blazes up due to ram, melting the ambrosias in the skull like ghee and bringing them to a full boil. Spilling over, they pervade all the realms of the three embodiments of the jinas, covering them with light rays like the colors of the rainbow and vapor like rainbow clouds. From that expanse imagine that clouds of all desirable outer, inner, and secret offerings, an inexhaustible circles of ornaments like the clouds of offerings of Arya Samantabhadra, unceasingly arise with increasing power for

all the buddha-fields until the three realms of the cycle of existence are empty. From that great ocean of ambrosia of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness the buddhas, bodhisattvas, gurus, chosen deities, dakinis, and guardians draw the vital essence of the ambrosia through the vajra tubes of their tongues. As they experience it, imagine that their minds are satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness; the accumulations of all sentient beings, including yourself and others, are perfected; obscurations are purified; and you all effortlessly achieve the supreme siddhi.

As for all other offerings, from the expanse of billowing clouds of fragrance and light emerge various kinds of offering substances, [251] various kinds of representative substances, various kinds of substances for practice, various kinds of substances for the fulfillment ritual, substances that correspond to the classes of guardians of the doctrine and local gods, deer, livestock, water-dwellers, species of birds and other winged creatures, animals with paws, hoofed animals, household goods, armor, weapons, ornaments, food, nourishment, drink, foods to lick, and foods to suck. All those attractive objects are spread forth like particles of dust and like mist enveloping the sky. Imagine them covering the sky like masses of clouds and offer them as a fine rain descending

upon the ground.

With respect to the practice of deliverance, the proper realization that the entire universe of samsara and nirvana is none other than one's own appearances is called the great fortress of the view. Not wavering from the manifestation of the nature of the ground is called the great highway of meditation. The so-called vitality of the visualization entails visualizing these external, inanimate worlds in such a way that is impossible for enemies and malevolent beings to survive once this visualization simply descends upon the nature of their life force, life, and vitality. That visualization is critical for not missing one's target. Diligent attention to the

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task of delivering up one's enemies by visualizing all the inner inhabitants of the universe as being perfected in the body, speech, mind, qualities, and enlightened activities of your chosen deity [252] is critical for preventing one's deed from turning back on oneself. Visualizing oneself as the great splendor, not being parted from the pride of one's chosen deity, and directly visualizing the supreme son kila, is a special, profound point for not being conquered.

In particular, simply due to directly visualizing effigies of one's enemies placed inside a drubkung--the black slaughterhouse of the Yama of Karma shaken by the din of the five poisons--like bugs who have fallen into a fire, there is no escape for them. For example, the ritual for bringing someone back from beyond the grave, and the means of deliverance by way of the transmissions on the enemy's life-force, purification, and abode entail different techniques, but they are similar in their meaning.

As for the method of trapping someone in a drub kung, visualize in front of you a celestial mansion with no doors or seams and with no way to escape anywhere else than out the top. Inside that, instead of an effigy place a drawing of a person with joined palms. That direct meditation and the one for those who have departed from this life are similar.

To summon your enemies, while imagining yourself as your chosen deity, emanate from your heart countless messengers carrying; hooks, nooses, iron chains, and bells [253], sent forth like a violent,

black wind that destroys the cosmos. As a result, imagine that the life, life force, and vitality of your enemies and malevolent beings are irresistibly drawn in and become nondual with that effigy, like one body of water merging into another. Moreover, the consciousness of the one who has departed is drawn in, like a fish on a hook, by light rays from the heart of the being in front of you[47] and dissolves repeatedly

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47 As your generate yourself as your chosen deity, so do you imagine your chosen deity in the space in front of you.

into the drawing of that person. Those two techniques are similar. Repeatedly imagine that the entire life force, life, and vitality of your enemy converge--like iron filings attracted by a magnet--in the form of the syllable nri on the tip of a kila and dissolve into the intervening space between the sun and the moon of the seat of yourself as your chosen deity. Alternatively, imagine that they are drawn up from the hole in the kila and dissolve into the hearts of the Heruka and consort dwelling in its bulbous handle, thereby increasing their power and might. That is the transmission on the [enemies'] life.

In a similar way, as for the six destinations of one who has passed away, you may bring forth the appearances of the six destinations in the forms of the six seed-syllables of the six classes of living beings. Then, from the seed-syllable at your heart, as your chosen deity, emanate rays of red light, thereby gradually incinerating [254] and transforming those appearances. That is called the transmission on the life of the six classes.

Ultimately, to manifest the primordial wisdom of awareness is to restore your own being. To represent that, emanate countless hum syllables from your heart as you visualize yourself as your chosen deity, completely filling the entire domain of samsara and nirvana. All the buddhas and buddha-fields, together with the animate and inanimate three realms dissolve into the hum syllables like salt dissolving into water or camphor dispersing into the air. Drawing them all back in, they dissolve into yourself such that you become

the great, universal splendor of the whole of samsara and nirvana. That meditation constitutes the restoration of your being.

The restoration of the kila ultimately refers to the manifestation of the great wisdom of realizing identitylessness and apprehending its inner depths for yourself. To represent that, in terms of conventional truth directly visualize the "supreme son" kila and emanate from it kila replicas, like sparks emerging from a

fire. They completely fill the whole of samsara and nirvana, and, like before, all phenomena of the two kinds are drawn back in and merge into the visualized supreme son kila, like salt dissolving into water. As a result, all the might, power, and strength of the whole of samsara and nirvana is drawn in and perfected. That visualization is the conventional path. [2551

As for the restoration of the rudra, ultimately all the animate and inanimate three realms are none other than the outer, inner, and secret rudras48 themselves, but that is obscured due to the influence of ignorance. That is to be established by means of investigation with great wisdom, and is to be realized as it is in reality. To represent that, directly visualize an effigy as your actual enemies and malevolent beings. From it black light is emanated, and the life force, life, vitality , merit, and possessions of all your enemies and malevolent beings are drawn in and merge with the light, like a water drop touched with the tip of a red-hot spike. Imagine them dissolving into the effigy. The three kinds of restoration are indispensable.

Then as for the actual deliverance, just by agitating the aggregates, elements, and sense-bases of your enemy with the tip of the blade of the kila like butter emerging from milk--the essential nature of the enemy's vitality turns into a shimmering, white syllable nri. That is completely drawn inside the tip of the kila--like sucking up a water drop--and it dissolves into the kila. Imagine that the kila is filled to the brim, like a sack filled with yogurt. Again, with the mere agitation of his aggregates, elements, and sense-bases, the essential nature of his life and merit turns into a shimmering green nri. [256] That is completely drawn into the tip of the kila, and all his taints

and faults are purified through the kila's aperture. Imagine that [his consciousness] emerges from the crown of his head and dissolves into yourself. Again imagine rays of

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48 Here the term rudra refers to conceptual grasping by which one reifies the distinctions of outer, inner, and secret phenomena.

white light emanating from the tip of the kila, utterly purifying all the vices, obscurations, karma, and mental afflictions of your enemies and malevolent beings. That visualization is called the transmission on purification. In a similar fashion, with the vase-water, the ambrosia of blessings of the deities of the mandala, one gradually, completely purifies all the karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities that are the seeds giving rise to rebirth among the six classes of sentient beings. That, too, is called the transmission on purification.

At the time of actual deliverance, when the kila strikes the hearts of your enemies and malevolent beings, their consciousness turns into a white bindu marked with the syllable a, and--as if it were being sucked up through a straw--it is drawn up through the aperture in the kila. Then all their afflictive and cognitive obscurations are completely purified, like removing stains from a white crystal. From the lower globe of the kila the enlightened awareness of the nirmanakaya is transferred to their mind-streams; from its bulbous handle the enlightened awareness of the sambhogakaya is transferred to their mind-streams, and from its upper globe the enlightened awareness of the dharmakaya is transferred to their mind-streams. They dissolve into the heart of the deity generated in front of you, such that they become Awakened in the expanse of the enlightened awareness of the four embodiments [257] and the five primordial wisdoms. That visualization, in which they are elevated from their own abode is the technique of the transmission on the [enemies'] abode.

In a similar fashion, to lead the dead from their abodes, all the appearances of the six classes of sentient beings, the miserable abodes that arise in just an instant, and all the habitual propensities,

karma, and mental afflictions of the cycle of existence are utterly purified, like roughly arousing someone from sleep. Then the appearances of a nirmanakaya-field emerge, and with the first phat, the enlightened awareness of the nirmanakaya is transferred; with the

second, the enlightened awareness of the sambhogakaya is transferred; and with the third, the enlightened awareness of the dharmakaya is transferred. As a result, the appearances of a pristine buddha-field come in full measure. The meditation of recognizing [awareness], achieving confidence, perfecting one's strength, and achieving stability is called the technique of the transmission on the abode.

Finally, all the aggregates, elements, and sense-basis of your enemies and malevolent beings turn into the form of flesh and blood. This is offered to the mouth of your chosen deity, thereby gathering the remains of the cycle of existence into the absolute nature. The aggregates, elements, and sense-bases of the dead remain in the form of an inscription,49 which is incinerated in the flames of primordial wisdom. Consequently, the residue of the cycle of existence converges into the five primordial wisdoms. Thus, that technique is similar to the preceding.

If the one who is visualized in that way is alive, once he is delivered, all the actions to lead him will definitely succeed. [258] If one lacks the three requisites of the fortress, highway, and the vitality, whatever ferocious activities one performs, they will be like children's games and one's goals will not be accomplished. Ultimately, in the great drub kung of emptiness, the wisdom of realizing identitylessness, like a sharp weapon, delivers the rudra of dualistic grasping onto the animate and inanimate universe into nonobjective identitylessness. Then the manifested primordial wisdom of awareness is aroused as the enlightened awareness of the three embodiments, and one proceeds to the supreme state of liberation, the attainment of perfect buddhahood; and the residue of the cycle of existence is withdrawn into the absolute nature.

49 This includes a drawing and the name of the dead person.

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The cause, vital force, and life of the impure cycle of existence and the miserable states of existence is self-grasping, so the realization of identitylessness is the transmission on the life of samsara. The nonconceptual, primordial wisdom of reality-itself dispels the taints of afflictive and cognitive obscurations into the absolute nature. That purification is the cleansing transmission on the removal of the habitual propensities of those two obscurations. Conventionally, by revealing the practice of deliverance, deliverance is possible. But all enemies and malevolent beings are self-appearances, delusive apparitions of conceptualization. Their deliverance, too, is an appearance of conceptualization, so that is the meaning of the ability to deliver them. Moreover, their deliverance is merely the appearance of their being liberated. Summoning is also revealed as gaining mastery over appearances. [259] As for binding, ultimately one is bound by the cord of awareness. Conventionally, red light in the form of cords is emitted from the heart of the being in front of you, completely tying up and firmly binding the life force, life, and vitality and the body, speech, and mind of your enemies and malevolent beings. All their strength and ability to rise up and move about is constrained and subdued, and you imagine them as if they were a corpse cast upon a plain.

As for isolating your [enemies from their protective] gods, this is the method for isolating inborn, primordial wisdom from the habitual propensities of ignorance, which become conflated, and for causing primordial wisdom to become manifest. That is ultimate reality. In terms of conventional reality, upon a drub kung place two feathers and imagine them as the owl-faced protector Tramen and as a crow-faced Tramen having a woman's body with wings and feathers. Imagine them emitting a foul odor that causes the gods of your enemies and malevolent beings to become intoxicated, fall unconscious, and be driven away. As those two are emitting their own calls, they set to fighting on

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the face of the drub kung and the fluttering of their wings causes all the protective gods who guard your enemies, to faint, leaving your enemies and malevolent beings stranded. Innumerable, terrifying replicas of the two Tramen are emanated from them, and they claw at [your enemies], flail their wings, [260] and rip at them with their beaks. As they are being devoured, they are banished into the darkness inside a mountain on an island on the far side of the ocean. Imagine that they are so dazed that they cannot return, and while reciting the mantra, flail them with a feather and fumigate them with substances. That is the way to expel them with substances, mantras, and samadhi.

Ultimately entering a state of intoxication is revealed as means for arousing a sense of violent joy before mental afflictions, karma, and habitual propensities have been dispelled. Conventionally, you unify all the karmic energies of all sentient beings of the three realms, which, in the form of blackness, enters through the tips of the ring-fingers of your enemies and malevolent beings. It then passes inside the vitality-channel, and by the power of its movement, you imagine that they become intoxicated and pass out. That visualization is the crucial aspect of this samadhi. Ferocious mantras such as jva la pa ya are the crucial aspect of the mantras, and fumigation with intoxicating incense is the crucial aspect of the substances.

Pulverizing in the mortar demonstrates that ultimately by the great power of nondual method and wisdom, the rudra of the view of the self is released to the point of vanishing altogether. Conventionally, in the mortar of the vagina of the Black, Female Wrathful Rolje all the forms, aggregates, elements, and sense-bases of your enemies and malevolent beings are gathered. [261] Hammered with the flaming vajra-pestle, the wrathful, crushing, supreme method, they are pulverized into fine particles. Know that imagining that is the gist

of the samadhi, the mortar and pestle are the essential substances, and the mantra ta tha ya and so forth is the essential mantra.

By apprehending for yourself the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, the siddhi of the four embodiments and the

five primordial wisdoms is achieved effortlessly; and that is the ultimate reality. Transforming siddhis into the spiritual path in dependence upon substances is taught as skillful means and as an auspicious act. In reality , even though you have mastered the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, residual appearances and mental states of samsara may still be present. By fathoming its inner depths and perfecting its power, they vanish into reality itself. Conventionally, the remains of the ganacakra are offered to the apparitional guests, the guardians of the remains. That is taught simply as skillful means and as an auspicious act.

Just as the aggregations of karma and mental afflictions and the array of thoughts of the three times are vanquished by the power of natural liberation, by summoning your enemies and malevolent beings to the torma, and annihilating them with the visualization techniques, their life and merit dissolves into yourself; their consciousness dissolves into the heart of your principle chosen deity; [262] and their flesh, blood, and bones turn into ambrosia. The assembly of haughty guardians of the doctrine gobble them up, and they obey your commands for their actions. That visualization is taught as a conventional reality.

Mundane existence that occurs in the natural order of dependent origination consists of displays of empty awareness, reality-itself. The Great Mother that realizes the reversed order of the twelve links of dependent origination, the twelve aspects of emptiness, is the manifestation of the absolute nature of the dharmakaya; and that is ultimate reality. The inexhaustible tormas

visualized as wish-fulfilling ambrosia are offered to the matrka-drdhas, and they are commanded to engage in the enlightened activities of protecting the doctrine; and that is conventional reality.

As for the doctrine, the source of all the Dharmas of scriptures and of realization is the nature of being of suchness, reality-itself. All misconceptions, evils, and arrays of afflictive thoughts are confined in the drub kung of equality, the emptiness of samsara and nirvana; and they are overwhelmed by the power of the displays of primordial wisdom. That is the ultimate reality. Imagine that in the

space of the black wind from the underlying ground, the blazing opening of the triangular, metal structure of the belly of the Lord of Death, Karmayama, suddenly gapes open. Innumerable emanations of the enlightened activities of all the jinas of the three times instantly and inexorably summon all the damsis, gabs, and pisacas, like dust blown away by the wind. [263] As soon as they are cast inside the drub kung, its surface closes over them, so that there is no chance of their escaping. Swooning into a state of bliss, they remain for a hundred eons, with no compulsive ideation arising in their mind-streams. Imagine the viras and viras emanated by the jinas dancing [upon the drub kung], and overcoming all types of roots of afflictions so that they can never arise again. That is conventional reality.

Ultimately, virtue has never been committed, the object of dedication is not established, and the agent who dedicates is not established. There is one taste in the display of great, pervasive reality-itself, so all collections of merit and knowledge are left in a self-arisen, spontaneously perfected state; and there is no dedication that is established apart from that. Conventionally, all the collections of merit you have accumulated during the three times are unified, and you should dedicate them--just as all the jinas of the three times have dedicated and will dedicate--as causes for the attainment of the state of Awakening of perfect

omniscience for all sentient beings without bias in terms of time or space.

[264] As for prayers, in reality no object of prayers is established apart from gaining mastery over the self-arisen, original state of the Protector. Conventionally, you should pray that all sentient beings may attain the state of Awakening of perfect omniscience. Ultimately, the perfection of all superb qualities--such as serenity, coolness, limpidity , and freedom from contamination--of great equality of primordially pure reality-itself is its auspicious, essential nature. Accordingly, all the jinas and jinaputras of the ten directions arise from the absolute nature of reality as beautiful appearances of rupakayas. They perform auspicious dances in the sky and with the melodious speech of Brahma they utter verses of auspiciousness.

Their minds are mercifully set on granting the glories of such benefits to all sentient beings. A rain of various, lovely, auspicious flowers falls from their hands. That visualization is taught as being of the nature of conventional, skillful means.

Ultimately, in the signless dharmakaya, the emanation and retraction of the displays of the whole of samsara and nirvana are not established. Conventionally, the stage of generation does not mistakenly slip into reification; [265] and it dispels the extreme of a substantialist view. The stage of generation, involving objects of attention with signs, is taught as a method for manifesting objectless, primordially pure, enlightened awareness, free of conceptual elaboration, and as a method for realizing the cycle of existence of the three realms to be like an illusion and a dream. Just as the pure appearances of primordial wisdom deities previously arose in their natural order from their causal syllables, so do they revert back into the state of reality-itself, suchness. Alternatively, all the displays of the buddha-fields withdraw into the palace; the palace withdraws into the assembly of deities; the entire assembly of deities withdraws into the absolute nature of the principle deity; the principle deity withdraws into the mantra-circle;

the mantra-circle withdraws into the hum; the hum dissolves into the crescent moon, which dissolves into the bindu, which dissolves into the nada. Then the nada is withdrawn into the absolute nature of reality. By remaining as long as you can in meditative equipoise in the state of pervasive emptiness, free of conceptual elaboration, the deities of meditative equipoise are withdrawn into the absolute nature.

Ultimately, there is nothing for self-cognizing awareness to generate or visualize as the divine displays of original, primordial wisdom. As for that method: instantaneously from the state of the absolute nature of reality , emptiness free of conceptual elaboration-like [266] the sudden appearance of a rainbow even though no rainbow exists in the sky, and like the sudden appearance of bubbles in water in which no bubbles exist--in that very instant, from the absolute nature of emptiness you suddenly visualize yourself as an assembly of primordial wisdom deities. Rays of light emanate from your three

places, drawing in all the inexhaustible circles of ornaments of all the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of all the jinas and jinaputras of the ten directions in the forms of white syllables om, red ah, and blue hum. As a result, imagine that your body is clothed in tightly woven vajra-armor, which cannot be pierced or destroyed. Never being separated from divine pride is called the path of conventional, skillful means.

Ultimately, there is no invocation or coming and going of the deities. By manifesting the self-arisen face of the ground-absolute nature as the spontaneous displays of the three embodiments, thoughts of ignorance are banished into oblivion. In general, all enemies and malevolent beings are nothing other than apparitions of thoughts of your own mind, and deities fabricated by thoughts arise as appearances to liberate you. As an analogy, one may prepare a powder of various grasses, wood, flowers, minerals, flesh, [267]

and blood intended as a remedy for an illness. With the healer's firm intention to benefit, and the patient's unwavering conviction that it will relieve the pain of the illness, an appearance of benefit certainly arises.

Conventionally, due to anxiety about being harmed by enemies and malevolent beings, in response to enemies and malevolent beings arising as aggressors, you emanate countless rays of light from your heart as your chosen deity. They invoke the jinas and jinaputras of the ten directions and the three times from the absolute nature of reality in the forms of terrifying rupakayas. With weapons and magical substances, they apply themselves to the tasks of summoning and delivering all the evil enemies and malevolent beings. This is analogous to taking revenge on one's enemy by sending an army against him. Likewise, [those rupakayas] fill all the realms of the universe, inexorably surrounding your enemies and malevolent beings, like dear driven into an enclosure; and you imagine them vigorously killing and mutilating them. Like a king arousing and summoning his troops and giving them their wages, you imagine tormas turning into inexhaustible ambrosia of primordial wisdom of the nature of mountains of flesh and oceans of blood; and you dedicate that. [268] As for reversal, ultimately, all

enemies and malevolent beings of mental afflictions are reversed back to intangible, nonobjective displays of reality-itself. That is done to manifest the primordial wisdom of awareness. In accordance with that method, from the heart and all other places of the deity visualized in front of you are emanated a malodorous mass of flames and assemblies of wrathful beings with iron scorpions, various weapons, and magical substances spreading everywhere throughout all the realms of the universe. These wrathful beings and their assistants deliver up all enemies and malevolent beings. They hack them up with various weapons. Many garudas and iron scorpions devour them, the remains are incinerated in a blaze of fire, and they are dispersed by a

razor-wind. Their consciousnesses are delivered into the absolute nature in which delusion is impossible, leaving not even a trace behind. That visualization is taught as a conventional path of skillful means.

Ultimately, ontological and phenomenological wisdom and great primordial wisdom, like the conflagration at the end of the eon, incinerate all mental states and mental factors. Like burning kindling in a fire, all adventitious contaminations are incinerated in the state of awareness that transcends causality. To indicate that method by way of an analogy, first of all bhrum [269] turns into a dark blue tongue of fire of the nature of the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality in the center; in the east it turns into a white tongue of fire of the nature of mirror-like primordial wisdom; in the south it turns into a yellow tongue of fire of the nature of the primordial wisdom of equality; in the west it turns into a red tongue of fire of the nature of the primordial wisdom of discernment; and in the north it turns into a blazing, dark green tongue of fire of the nature of the primordial wisdom of accomplishment.
Imagine pacification as round, increase as square, power as semicircular, and spontaneity as octagonal. Also imagine pacification as a white palace of fire, increase as yellow, power as red, ferocity as green or blue- green, and spontaneity as dark blue or multicolored. For all those, know that their essential nature is primordial wisdom, while their form is palaces of the nature of tongues of fire. In their center, imagine the time of pacification in

the morning as being of the nature of a white assembly of deities; the time of increase at noon as a yellow assembly of deities; the time of power in the evening as a red assembly of deities; and the time of ferocity at dusk as being of the nature of a green assembly of deities.

Imagine the essential nature of all the substances to be burned in the process of pacification as undefiled ambrosia of primordial wisdom [270] in the

form of those substances, which are offered to the mouths [of the deities]. As a result, the minds of the entire assembly of deities are satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness. Then white-colored rays of light emanate from their bodies, completely clearing away all diseases, demons, vices, obscurations, karmas, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities of your own mind-stream and those of the beings you are visualizing, like the sun shining upon frost. Repeatedly imagine them being totally purified, without even a trace being left behind. That is the visualization for pacification.

For increase, visualize the entire assembly of radiant deities, invite all the jinas and jinaputras of the three times in the form of your special deity, and imagine them dissolving [into that assembly]. Imagine the essential nature of all the substances to be burned as immeasurable, undefiled ambrosia of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness in the form of each of those substances. Offering them to the mouths of the assembly of deities, their minds are satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness; and all their majesty, power, and ability expand greatly. Blazing rays of light are emanated, drawing in the compassion, blessings, empowerments, siddhis, primordial wisdoms, and qualities of the entire assembly of the jinas, bodhisattva, gurus, chosen deities, Dharma Protectors, gods of wealth, and treasure-masters, without exception; and they draw in all the life, merit, radiance, power, and ability of all gods and demons, the eight classes of lhamasin, and all the sentient beings of the three realms of the universe. [271] Having dissolved into yourself and the visualized [deity], repeatedly imagine that your life, merit, wealth, empowerments, siddhis, power, and ability all greatly increase and grow. Imagine that all the empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of the deity generated in front of you also dissolve into

yourself in the form of a yellow mass of light, such that your vitality, merit, wealth, power, and creative abilities are increased and stabilized.

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For power, all the substances to be burnt are displayed in the form of each of those substances, and their essential nature is bliss and emptiness, the vital essence of the ambrosia of undefiled, primordial wisdom. The mere sight of this brings fulfillment, the mere touch of it brings satisfaction, and the mere experience of it has the ability to liberate. By offering that to the mouths of the primordial wisdom deities, their minds are intoxicated by the taste of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness; the radiance, majesty, power, and enormous might of their bodies blazes up, withdrawing in the form of rays of red light all the power, empowerments, and siddhis of the jinas and jinaputras of the ten directions and the four times, as well as all the guardians of the doctrine, Dharma protectors, gods of wealth, and treasure-masters. Dissolving into yourself, imagine that you possess the power of mastery over both samsara and nirvana. [272] Moreover, all the compassion, blessings, and siddhis of the deity generated in front of you dissolve into yourself in the form of rays of red light. From your heart and the heart of the deity generated in front of you immeasurable rays of red light are emanated in forms like hooks and nooses. All the enjoyments, wealth, and bedding of the gods, demons, and humans of the three realms and the three worlds, of male and female beings, and of the eight classes of lhamasin, yaksas, gods of wealth, and treasure-masters are inexorably brought under your control and placed in front of you. Consequently, faced with the majesty and unbearably glorious luster of your own body and that of the deity generated in front of you, they agree to be your servants and to work on your behalf; and they swear to be your slaves forever. As a sign of their oath, vajras appear on the crowns of their heads. Having received the vitality of their solemn pledge, imagine that an unceasing flow of a torrential rain of all manner of enjoyments descends upon your dwelling. With

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the use of such visualizations you should become skilled in the

transformations of the objects of subjugation.

On occasions for ferocity the substances to be burnt are visualized as being of the essential nature of the combined flesh, blood, life force, life, and vitality of your enemies and malevolent beings. [273] They are forcefully summoned and inserted [in the drub kung]; and when they are finally scooped up with the ritual ladle, all the life force, life, physical form, vitality, and breath of those enemies is taken with the ladle, like fruit scooped up by the handful. Then repeatedly imagine the clear, pale soles of their feet dissolving into the mouths of the visualized deities in the midst of the fire, like a pebble thrown into a pond. Even in the case of a murdered person, you imagine his body and consciousness indivisibly dissolving into the mouth of your chosen deity; and as you count the number of scoops and offer them into the fire, by visualizing this intently, that person will certainly not take birth among demons or malevolent spirits. By engaging in the pacificatory visualizations with respect to others, know that the mind of the dead person is drawn into the absolute nature of your chosen deity. By repeatedly performing burnt offerings in those ways, you have the advantage of accomplishing the four types of enlightened activities; and those are taught as conventional reality.

Imagine that the divine palace of your own body is filled with the entire assembly of deities of the mandala like an overflowing mound of sesame seeds; and with the ritual ladles of your hands offer all your food and drink as displays of the ambrosia of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness. That is the unsurpassed burnt offering of transforming food and drink into the spiritual path. [274]

Ultimately, accurately realizing and manifesting the primordial wisdoms and qualities of reality-itself, the sugatagarbha, is the vase empowerment of the

body; manifesting the precious, spontaneous, absolute nature by means of pervasive, all-seeing, great wisdom is the secret empowerment of the speech; manifesting reality-itself, the nonconceptual, absolute nature, is the wisdom- gnosis empowerment of the mind; and manifesting all the qualities of the embodiments,

primordial wisdoms, paths, and fruitions, which are unsought and spontaneously perfected is the fourth empowerment of the word, or the unsurpassed, supreme siddhi.

As the method for that, a mass of white light marked by om is emanated from the absolute nature of the bodies of all the deities generated in front of you. This enters your body through the crown of your head, blessing your body as the nature of the immutable body-vajra, and manifesting the fully maturated state of a vidyadhara. All the secret empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of the speech as a mass of red light marked by ah dissolve through your throat into your voice, blessing your voice as the unceasing speech-vajra, and manifesting the state of a vidyadhara with mastery over life. All the empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of the mind [275] as dark blue light marked by hum dissolve into your heart, blessing your mind as the undeluded mind-vajra, and manifesting the state of a Mahamudra vidyadhara. Once again, five- colored rays of light, like a mass of rainbows, from the five places [of the deities in front of you] dissolve into your own five places, utterly purifying your two obscurations and all habitual propensities, and blessing you with all the inexhaustible, circles of ornaments of their bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities, and manifesting the state of a spontaneous vidyadhara. In short, the meditation of imagining that you have achieved all the supreme and mundane siddhis without exception is taught as a conventional reality.

Ultimately, all such paths taught as skillful means of the stage of generation are self-emergent, naturally complete in the ground-awareness, the

great freedom from extremes. All bodily and verbal activities of the path of skillful means of the stage of generation are features of the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground. Taking a metaphor for each one, they are taught simply in terms of the field of experience of the mind caught up in activities and agents. Know that they have no reality apart from that. Until now, under the influence of ignorance, [276] the qualities of the ground have been reduced to something ethically neutral, which is of no benefit or harm. If you know how they are perfect in this way, that perfection is made

manifest, so that is an unsurpassed feature that distinguishes the vehicle of the Great Perfection. By recognizing the method aspect of the stage of generation in the absolute nature of wisdom, [one knows that] the tantra of the union of the related wisdom and method is none other than this.

As for the method of transferring one's impure body, speech, and mind into the realm of the three primordial wisdom vajras, small-minded people cannot accept pristine space, the great mystery of all the jinas, the absolute nature free of all extremes of conceptual elaboration, in which ultimately there is no body. By practicing in accordance with that reality, they are finally liberated into the realm of its essential nature. One's own body is instantaneously [transformed] into red Vajrayogini, with a blazing curved vajra-blade in her right hand subjugating all the three realms, and her left hand holding a marked skull cup displaying the three realms as ambrosia of the enlightened body, speech, and mind. With her legs in an advancing posture, she is a youthful maiden of sixteen years, her body beautifully adorned with the signs and symbols of enlightenment. [277] The braids of her hair are adorned with five kinds of precious substances and are beautified with a diadem, and her head is wreathed with various flowers. With a slightly peaceful arid slightly ferocious countenance, her body is visualized as appearing, and yet not inherently

established, in the midst of a blazing mass of rainbow fire. Its essential nature is empty and primordially not established as anything; but to forcefully counteract the delusion of clinging to it as a material composite, its emptiness is presented not as inside; rather, emptiness is imagined as the limpidity of the body. Imagining its limpidity inside in the center, as a means to subdue the vital energy and mind in emptiness, her hollow body is visualized as a pavilion of light. In its center is a hollow channel, a tube of light, which is white on the outside, symbolizing bliss, red on the inside, symbolizing clarity, and indigo blue in between, symbolizing emptiness. Its interior is empty and unobstructed, symbolizing the Spirit of Awakening; it is as long as a medium arrow shaft, and its surface has no width at all. Its upper end at the cakra of great bliss at the crown of the head is suddenly open, and its lower end below the

navel is firmly closed like a joint in a bamboo. Its characteristics are that it is as straight as the trunk of a plantain tree, [278] as thin as a lotus petal, as clear as a sesame oil lamp, and as shiny as the sap from a teak tree. As a sheer emptiness, it abides in the essential nature of the dharmakaya.

On its right is the red roma channel, red on the outside and white on the inside. On its left is the white kyangma channel, white on the outside and red on the inside. The lower ends of both of them are inserted inside the central channel below the navel. Visualize their upper ends curving around the back of the ears and opening out through both nostrils. Know that those three symbolize the three embodiments.

The so-called five stacked cakras in that central channel have secondary channels: in the first cakra distinctly visualize thirty-two secondary channels, in the second, sixteen secondary channels, in the third, eight secondary channels, in the fourth, sixty-four, and in the fifth, twenty-eight secondary channels.50

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50 Those are the crown, throat, heart, navel, and genital cakras respectively.

However, ultimately the whole of samsara and nirvana is pervaded by the center of emptiness; the roma represents the primordial wisdom of its clear nature; and the kyangma stands for the great primordial wisdom of omnipresent compassion.51 All the aggregates, elements, and sense- bases are emptiness, which is primordially not established and non-local. The placement of emptiness in the center is taught as a basis for purification, but it is certainly not established. [279] The three embodiments are revealed as the three channels as great emptiness, which is primordially self-arisen. The nine yanas are revealed as remedies to purify the obscurations of ignorance, karma, and mental afflictions in the absolute nature.

Accordingly, by recognizing the karmic energies as being of the nature of karma, the mental afflictions, and habitual propensities, the

residual energies are cleared out by means of the nine-fold expulsion. Imagine that all the karma, mental afflictions, vices, obscurations, and habitual propensities aroused by the affliction of hatred are expelled in the form of smoke-colored air and disappear into space. Clear those out three times through the right nostril. Imagine that all the karma, mental afflictions, vices, obscurations, and habitual propensities aroused by the affliction of attachment are expelled in the form of dark red air, and clear them out three times through the left nostril. Imagine that all the karma, mental afflictions, vices, obscurations, and habitual propensities aroused by the affliction of delusion are expelled in the form of dark blue air and disappear into space like a rainbow. Clear those out three times through both nostrils equally. Imagine that all illnesses, demons, vices, obscurations, and habitual propensities, together with the material aggregate of flesh and blood, disappear into space in the form of minute particles, like beating out a soiled cloth. [280] Imagine that in the domain of the channels, vital energies, and

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51Those three symbolize the dhannakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya respectively.

bindus, all the causes that delude one in the endless cycle of existence, together with their seeds and habitual propensities, are expelled as fragments of blackness and disappear into space. Recognize this purification of the body as the sublime, quintessential means for clearing out evils and malevolent beings.

Then, in terms of the vital energy of meditative equipoise and the vital energy of post-meditation, ultimately the absolute nature of wisdom is apprehended in the state of the great clear light, the awareness of primordial wisdom of all the jinas. Leaving your body, speech, and mind in a state of inactivity is the unsurpassed, supreme technique for inserting the vital energy and mind into the central channel. In that technique, with your physical posture imbued with the seven attributes of Vairocana, in the space at the level of the tip of your nose imagine the synthesized essential nature of all empowerments, blessings, and siddhis of the bodies, speech, minds,

qualities, and enlightened activities of all the jinas and jinaputras of the ten directions and the four times in the form of light blue air, like a covering of mist. Imagine that from your nostrils the vital energy of blessings and primordial wisdom is drawn in like a blue, silken thread or the wafting smoke of incense. [281] Imagine that they swirl totally into the lower end of the central channel by way of the roma and kyangma channels; and in the central channel, like an inflated placenta, all the channel-knots come completely loose. Imagine that the nutriment of the vital energies dissolves into the five secondary channels, and the residues swirl into the lower end of the central channel. During each session, three times rotate your torso and press down, uninterruptedly drawing up a continuous stream of the gentle energy, and hold that as long as you can. That is the vital energy of meditative equipoise.

Alternatively, inside the central channel at the level of your heart visualize a smooth, round bindu of five lights, and in its center imagine a clear,

shimmering, white syllable a, pale like a full moon. In the lower end of the central channel imagine the energies of the five primordial wisdoms in the form of a vajra-swastika. As in the previous case, imagine that the nutriment of the energies dissolves into the syllable a and the bindu; while the residue dissolves into the variegated vajra, which is the basis of the energies. By sustaining that visualization, the energies will be inserted into the central channel, and the energies of the primordial wisdoms will rest in their own place.

In post-meditation as well, ultimately, you do not leave the domain of your own awareness, without delusion with respect to appearances or the mind. Those who lack such a crucial point should continually press down their vital energies below the navel, without ever forgetting this, including during such activities as eating, sleeping, walking, and sitting. [282] That is the vital energy of the post-meditative state, and it is especially profound to achieve stability in that.

Ultimately, the primordial wisdom of knowing reality as it is makes manifest the center that is present as the ground; and the primordial

wisdom that sees the full range of phenomena extinguishes the karmic energies in their own place and establishes the energy of primordial wisdom in its place. The flaming up of tummo, the great, inactive, empty awareness, the fire of primordial wisdom, the union of bliss and emptiness, which blazes as a creative expression of the power of the five primordial wisdoms, pleases the mandala of self-appearing, primordial wisdom. Once all the deluded karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities of ignorance are naturally purified, you achieve in yourself the great depths of the primordially pure dharmakaya. That is the ultimate tummo.

Conventionally, visualize the essential nature of the vajra of the skillful means of great bliss in the form of the syllable ham at the upper end of the central channel of emptiness. At the lower end visualize the essential nature of

the wisdom of great emptiness in the form of a cone. That is struck by the essential nature of the primordial wisdom of discernment, which is a creative expression of awareness, in the form of the energy of the primordial wisdom of blessings. Consequently, the tummo tongue of flame of primordial wisdom bears four characteristics: it is red in color, of the essential nature of bliss, of the nature of clarity, and hot to the touch. Its tip is of the nature of wisdom, visualized as sharp and darting. [283] As it flickers many times, you slowly inhale, there is a fullness at the navel, a churning in the stomach, and the residue is shot up like an arrow. Due to those four applications, the tongue of fire blazes in the navel cakra and suffuses it, incinerating all karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities so that none remain. The tongue of flame grows and totally engulfs the cakra of the wheel of dharma at the heart, incinerating all karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities so that none remain. Growing upwards, it totally suffuses the cakra of the wheel of enjoyment at the throat, burning to a singe all karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities. Still increasing in size, it totally fills and suffuses the entire cakra of great bliss at the crown of the head, burning to a singe all karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities. Flaming up again, it strikes the syllable ham at the crown, increasing the sense of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness in which skillful means and wisdom meet. The

ambrosia of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness from the bindu descends in a continuous stream, filling and suffusing all the secondary channels of the cakra of great bliss, and making immeasurable offerings pleasing to the body mandala of the buddha sugatas. [284] Their minds are satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness, the two accumulations are completed, and the two obscurations are purified. Then imagine that you receive the vase empowerment of the body and the great primordial wisdom of delight arises in your mind-stream.

Again the remains of the ambrosia descend, pervading all the secondary channels of the cakra of enjoyment at the throat, and making offerings pleasing to the speech mandala of the sugatas. Imagine that their minds are satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness, the accumulations are completed, the obscurations are purified, you receive the secret empowerment of the speech, and the primordial wisdom of supreme delight arises in your mind-stream.

Again [the ambrosia] descends to your heart, pervading all the secondary channels of the dharmacakra at the heart, and making offerings pleasing to the mind mandala of the sugatas. Imagine that their minds are satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness, the accumulations are completed, the obscurations are purified, you receive the wisdom-gnosis empowerment of the mind, and the primordial wisdom of extraordinary delight arises in your mind-stream and you experience it.

Again [the ambrosia] descends to your navel, filling and pervading all the secondary channels of the cakra of emanation at the navel and making offerings pleasing to the mandala of the types of qualities of the sugatas. Imagine that their minds are satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness, [285] the accumulations are completed, the obscurations are purified, you receive the precious word empowerment, and the primordial wisdom of inborn delight arises in your mind-stream and you experience it.

Again [the ambrosia] descends to your genital region, pervading all the secondary channels of the cakra of sustaining bliss, and making offerings pleasing to the mandala of the types of enlightened

activities of the sugatas. Imagine that the undefiled bliss of the ambrosia of bliss and emptiness is generated, [285] the tummo fire of primordial wisdom is conjoined with great warmth, the blessing energy of primordial wisdom generates power, the accumulations are completed, the obscurations are purified, and you simultaneously receive all the

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empowerments and siddhis of the inexhaustible circles of ornaments of their bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities. Imagine that inconceivable, primordial wisdom arises in your mind-stream, and you experience it.

Again the ambrosia of great bliss descends into the base of the tongue of fire of the cone, such that you experience the great primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness.

Again imagine that the nature of the blessing energy of primordial wisdom, the tummo fire of primordial wisdom, and the ambrosia of the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness grows and bursts into flame, completely filling all the channels and elements of the body. Then all obstacles, demons, malevolent beings, compulsive ideation, and habitual propensities [286] are incinerated, like tiny insects consumed in the fire at the end of the eon.

Again the central channel together with the fire grows larger, such that the entire animate and inanimate cosmos with its three realms are inserted inside the central channel, and all concepts of grasping onto the animate and inanimate cosmos and all karma and mental afflictions are burnt to a singe. Imagine that they all become of the nature of emptiness. The entire central channel together with all the fire remain as they were previously, and while focusing your consciousness on them, count many full breaths of air.

Alternatively, with yourself as Vajrayogini, visualize a red cone at your navel, together with a bindu and nada, and an upside down, white syllable ham at the crown of your head. In the space at the level of the tip of your nose, draw in, like a silken thread, the mist-like, blue, blessing energies of primordial wisdom through both nostrils. Passing through the paths of the roma and kyangma, they unify at the lower end of the central channel. Agitating the bindu in

the cone, the tongue of flame of wisdom-gnosis blazes up, incinerating all karma, mental

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afflictions, and habitual propensities; all knots in the channels are loosened by the vital energies, so that they dissolve naturally. Imagine that the fire fills the cakras, and your entire body is suffused with great warmth. All great, [287] medium, and small channels are filled with the fire-energy, and in the entire network of channels within the body a white bindu rests on top of each knot, and a red bindu rests below each one, so that they merge indivisibly. All qualities of experience and realization are more and more enhanced. The entire interior of the central channel is suffused with the tongue of fire, and a continuous stream of the ambrosia of the undefiled, primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness of the melted bindu of the ham syllable strikes the cone. Imagine that as a result, the fire and ambrosia blaze nondually, such that the primordial wisdom of the four delights of bliss and emptiness suddenly arises in your mind-stream and becomes immutably stable. Retain many counts of the breath in accordance with the duration of your meditation session.

At all times and in all situations do not forget the growth of the tummo tongue of flame of primordial wisdom in the central channel and all the cakras, and focus your consciousness on pressing it down. That is the crucial point for the post-meditative state, and that, too, will cause the warmth of bliss to blaze mightily.

Some people take this as the foundation and train in space yoga. This is done as follows. Noisily sucking in the three times, such that everything, right down to the last bit of space, [288] is drawn into your mouth, imagine that your entire belly is filled with a blueness; and the full extent of space is pervaded by your abdomen. Imagine that all of space is enclosed inside your abdomen, space and your vital energies and mind indivisibly, spaciously, and gently relax; and remain in meditative equipoise as long as you can.

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Again suck in all air, imagining it in the aspect of the color green, such that all air moving through space, together with its nutriment and vital essence, completely fills your abdomen. Again, with a

sucking sound, imagine that all water in the aspect of the color white are inhaled inside you, such that water, together with its vital essence and power, completely fills your belly. Again imagine all the earth of the three realms in the aspect of the color yellow being inhaled with a sucking sound, leaving not even a trace of a remainder, and totally filling your abdomen. Again sucking in all fire in the aspect of red light, and the nutriment and vital essence of fire of the cosmos, together with the warmth of bliss, completely fills your belly. Placing fire and your mind-itself in the state of nondual pervasiveness is the sublime path of the yoga of the display of vital essence of the elements.

In reality, the central channel is emptiness; [289] the fire and vital energy are reality as it is and the full range of phenomena; the syllable ham is the skillful means of great bliss; the cone is the essential nature of the wisdom of emptiness; the cakras are the five kinds of primordial wisdom; the five aggregates are the five sugatas; the five elements are the five consorts; the eight faculties are the eight male bodhisattvas; the eight objects are the eight female bodhisattvas; the four extremes of substantialism and nihilism are the four gate-keepers; all assemblies of thoughts are the spontaneously present assemblies of noble viras and yoginis of the absolute nature which vanishes into emptiness. Thus, the support is the channels; that which moves is the vital energies; and the display is the essential nature called bodhicitta. They are perfected as natural expressions of reality-itself, the sugatagarbha, so that is called the Great Perfection of the four modes of existence. Accurately knowing the manner in which they are perfected is called the Great Perfection of the path of reality-itself. By establishing with discerning wisdom the ethically neutral state of the Great Perfection that is present as the

ground, one accurately knows the nature of existence. Consequently, one progresses all at once through the grounds and paths, and just that is the genuine Great Perfection of the definite completion of the path.

In that way, due to the qualities of training with the channels, bindus, and vital energies, [290] the siddhi of the fruitional Great

Perfection becomes manifest; and one achieves mastery over the eight common siddhis. Moreover, The Tantra of the purificatory Yoga of the Channels, Vital Energies, and Bindus is none other than this."

At that point, Bodhisattva Vidyavajra made this vast prayer:

"O excellent, excellent, Bhagavan!
The empty vajra pierces jewels.
Empty Rahula conquers the sun and moon.
Empty tongues of flame burn up kindling.
The empty movement of the air disperses material things.
Empty space conquers the animate and inanimate cosmos.
Empty reality-itself conquers phenomena.
The buddhas conquer the maras.
The Sangha conquers false views.
May the view of emptiness be realized
With the precious truth of emptiness.
May the meaning of the Great Perfection be realized
With the precious view of emptiness.
By the power of the Great Perfection
May the cycle of existence be dredged from its depths."

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Then he continued, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, thus, even if one correctly knows the nature of being of the Great Perfection of Ssamsara and nirvana, the great expanse which totally subsumes the inexhaustible ornamental wheel of the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of the jinas and jinaputras of the three times, [291] the great quintessence of all the dakinis and viras, in what is that synthesized, what does it boil down to, and what are its names? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, first simply determining the mode of existence of the ground as discussed previously, then ascertaining emptiness is the ground-emptiness, the great middle way. Therefore, the knowledge that all the embodiments, primordial wisdoms, buddha-fields, and displays, and all of samsara, nirvana, and the paths are not other than the nature of the ground itself is called the Great Perfection of samsara and nirvana. To sentient beings who

have not gained liberation within themselves, the ground appears as the nature of samsara, and clinging to it, they become deluded. By turning away from the delusion of mental engagement with self-concepts and signs and establishing the ground by means of analytical, great wisdom, one comes to know the characteristics of the ground as they are. Profoundly fathoming all the avenues of the path and fruition and of skillful means and wisdom as the nature of the ground itself is the synthesis [292] of the pristine space of the ground.

What does it boil down to? However the various reflections of planets and stars may appear in the ocean, they are not other than the ocean itself, so they can be boiled down to the ocean. All appearances of the animate and inanimate cosmos and sensory objects are not other than space itself, so they can be boiled down to space. Likewise, know the way in which all of samsara, nirvana, and the paths are not other than the nature of the space of the absolute

nature of reality, for they can be boiled down to the pristine space of the absolute nature of reality.

How is it to be named? The entire array of names in the realms of samsara and nirvana are ascertained as names of the sugatagarbha. In particular, the names of all the Dharmas that cause the path to become manifest are applied to this. Since it is the unsurpassed transference and entrance to the manifestation of the fruition--the state of the precious Spirit of Awakening--it is called the Spirit of Awakening.

All authentic realities are included in the precious Spirit of Awakening, so it is reality; and just as the ocean is ascertained as the source of all rivers and streams, that is ascertained as the ultimate source of all Dharmas, so it is ultimate. Just that is free of all flaws and taints, so it is purified; and [293] since all of samsara, nirvana, the path, and fruition are perfected in the absolute nature of reality, it is perfected. All the phenomena of samsara and nirvana are established by means of discerning wisdom, and the wisdom of realizing identitylessness is made manifest. Pervasive, all-seeing, great wisdom manifests the nature of existence, its inner depths are

reached within oneself, and by retaining one's own place of rest, the cycle of existence of the three realms is dredged from its depths. Not regarding this as being like dream appearances disappearing into the absolute nature, or like the fabrications of an illusion dissolving into the absolute nature, by the might of the great mind, the cycle of existence of the three realms is liberated as displays of the three embodiments. So that is called spirit.52

These teachings, far more secret than any mystery, are of the nature of the synthesis of the mystery of the minds of all the jinas, so they are called secret. As for the way to practice the path to the nature of existence of this very ground

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52 The above paragraph gives an etymology of the term ultimate Spirit of Awakening (Skt. paramartha bodhicitta, Tib., don dam byang chub kyi sems).

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sugatagarbha, all the following are people with bad karma, who are not suitable vessels for the Secret Mantra:

- those who are not suitable vessels
- types who are not drawn to Mahayana Dharma and who do take delight in the Hinayana
- and those whose minds are generally unfit, whose mind-streams succumb to spiritual sloth and distractions, idling away their lives, delighting in conversation and friends, [294] and devoting their lives to that
- types who wander about in mobs like birds and dogs in search of food
- those with many opinions, coarse minds, little fortitude, and who say out loud whatever comes to mind
- those who are desire and strive for riches, fame, profit, and devious conduct in this life, who, even though they are told about death, take no interest in it
- those who for their whole lives are nauseated by the Dharma and deeds of [spiritual] people and the Three Jewels
- those who, when Dharma is explained to them, just retort, 'I know that. I've heard that,' while holding false views concerning the Three Jewels
- those who, even when the words of Dharma are explained to them regard them as untruthful lies
- those who listen to the Dharma before their spiritual mentor and behave with great faith and reverence while in the presence of their mentor, but who steal the wealth of his followers when they are out of sight of the mentor
- those with degenerated samayas who revile and slander their spiritual mentor, and all his followers and friends and express deplorable, wrong views

- evil enemies of the Teachings who listen to the Dharma from their spiritual mentor, but engage in conduct that impairs the

- status of their mentor and spiritual friends and brings harm to the Teachings
- and those who trust nothing, whose minds are easily changed, and whose ideas vacillate

All of them will have no karmic connection [295] with the profound Secret Mantra in all their lives, and they are people with bad karma whose mind-streams have been influenced by evil maras and damsis. Even if they were taught Dharma of the Secret Mantra, that would be of no benefit but would rather act as a cause for them to fall into vajra-hell. Thus, it is very secret.

As for the time, inappropriate occasions for teaching and listening to Dharma are times of:

- walking in the marketplace or in crowds
- working
- urinating or defecating
- joking or quarreling
- pompously carrying a parasol, a staff, or a weapon
- giving teachings other than those one has heard
- and fingering one's rosary, performing circumambulations, wearing a cap and shoes, doing work, or engaging in conversation.

It is inappropriate to teach Dharma on those occasions. If people gather without faith, they too will fall into hell, so on such inappropriate occasions and to people who are not suitable vessels it is wrong to give teachings even upwind of them. So they should be hidden like stolen property. Thus, that is the solemn, hidden secret.

In general, the primordially Awakened, undeluded, unfluctuating dharmakaya, the sugatagarbha, pervades the mind-streams of all sentient beings of

the three realms. Just as [296] all the planets and stars in the ocean are not other than the ocean and are pervaded by the ocean, all the phenomena of the cycle of existence are pervaded by reality-itself. However, under the influence of ignorance, by nature it remains concealed, so that is the concealed secret. Due to its being imbued

with those two great mysteries, [the Secret Mantra] is called secret.

All the delusive mind states and appearances of all sentient beings of the three realms are overcome in the absolute nature of awareness, which transcends causality, so [the Secret Mantra] is called mantra. All the intellectual ideologies of the eight yanas are overcome in the state of the dharmakaya, which is free of signs. Since that is the great primordial wisdom of awareness, free of extremes, [the Secret Mantra] is called mantra.53

The characteristics of that clear light Great Perfection, the unsurpassed Secret Mantra, this very awareness that is present as the ground are:

- unbreakable
- indestructible
- real
- firm
- stable
- totally unimpedable
- utterly unconquerable
- liberating sentient beings
- terrifying
- frightening
- shattering all knowledge-mantras
- overcoming all knowledge-mantras

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53 The preceding discussion gives an etymology of the term Secret Mantra (Skt., guhyarnantra, Tib., gsang sngags).

- commanding all deeds of knowledge-mantras
- accomplishing that which has not been accomplished
- sustaining that which has been accomplished [297]
- fulfilling all desires
- protecting all sentient beings
- serene
- expansive
- straightening out all sentient beings

- stupefying
- accomplishing all deeds
- destroying all others' deeds
- routing all grahas
- liberating all grahas
- summoning all bhutas
- delivering all bhutas

As it is endowed with those qualities, it is called vajra. As for the term yana, even when there is delusion, all the vices, obscurations, and miseries of all sentient beings do not worsen it, so it is self-upholding; and at the time of Spiritual Awakening, all the primordial wisdoms and qualities of the realms of the buddhas do not correct or improve it. Thus, since all good and evil upholds itself, it is called yana.54

Upon establishing all self-concepts and delusive appearances as being of the empty nature of reality-itself, the wisdom of realizing identitylessness is made manifest, and one realizes the state of emptiness free of conceptual elaboration. That realization is the most sublime of all states of consciousness, so

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54The preceding discussion gives an etymology of the term Vajrayana (Tib., rDo rje theg pa).

it is call wisdom. [298] As it transcends knowledge and the objects of knowledge, it is called the Perfection of Wisdom.

Now the unmanifest clear-light nature of the minds of sentient beings is identified, and one ascertains Ssamsara and nirvana as displays of that clear light. Thus, is it called the clear light. The ultimate, indestructible vajra is of the nature of the unified essence of all the jinas of the three times, so it is called the essence.55

Because it transcends all the karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities of the cycle of existence, it is called samsara and nirvana; and since all the phenomena included in samsara and nirvana are completely included among the displays of the suchness

of reality-itself, one speaks of its being complete. Because all the causes of samsara, nirvana, and the path and their effects are totally perfected in the expanse of the great, pervasive reality-itself, it is called perfect.

As it does not fall to the extreme of birth, it is free of birth; as it does not fall to the extreme of aging, it is free of aging; as it does not fall to the extreme of decline, it is free of decline; and as it does not fall to the extreme of death, it is free of death. That which is free of those is given the label of youthful. The spontaneous displays of the great, inner luminosity of the ground itself do not separate themselves off [from the ground], so the label of vase is given.56 [299]

As analogies, all the [reflections of the] planets and stars do not separate themselves off from the expanse of the ocean, and the entire animate and inanimate cosmos does not separate itself off from the expanse of space. All the Dharmas of the path, the various experiences of joyful and painful sensations, all the displays of the fruitional embodiments and primordial wisdoms, all the causal virtues of accumulating merit, and all their resultant appearances of joy are without differentiation perfected in the ground-sugatagarbha itself; so it is called the embodiment.

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55 The above paragraph gives an etymology of the clear light essence (Tib. 'od gsal snying po).
56 The above paragraph gives an etymology of the youthful vase (Tib. gzhon nu'i bum pa).

The mode of existence of the dharmakaya. the awareness that is present as the ground, cannot be fathomed by the intellect; it cannot be analyzed by the mind; it transcends objects of articulation; and it subsumes everything, so it is known as the bindu. Whatever aspects of samsara and nirvana appear, they are of one taste in the fundamental, original, primordial ground, so it is called sole.

The great expanse of the pervasive reality-itself of the whole of samsara and nirvana, free of a center or periphery, dissolves into its

inner luminosity and the state of vivid, great, primordial wisdom is naturally clear, so it is called the clear light. The ultimate vajra of the nature of indestructibility, the essential nature of the unified essence of all the jinas of the three times, [300] is called the essence.57 Because it is not confined to any region and does not fall to any extreme, it is called the center . Because it views samsara and nirvana as apparitions of the mind and is the agent who dwells within, such that it is as if its emanations were sent forth outside, it is called the consciousness of Mahamudra. All those, too, are simply facets of the ground.

Even when the ground is reduced to something ethically neutral, all the displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms are none other than self-arisen, naturally perfect, inner displays of the ground itself. So that is called the Great Perfection of the time of the ground. As for the Great Perfection of the time of the path, when the awareness that is present as the ground becomes manifest, it dissolves into unmodified, ordinary mental states and appearances; so ordinary mental states and appearances are perfected. Since reality-itself does not lend itself to the extreme of nihilism, the extremists' view of substantialism is perfected; and since it is not apprehended as the extreme of the substantialist view, it perfects the mind that seeks the path of the nihilistic view. Even if suffering, its source, cessation, and the path are held to be substantial objects, by

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57The above paragraph gives an etymology of the clear light vajra essence (Tib. 'od gsal rdo rje'i snying po).

realizing personal identitylessness, realizing that they do not exist from one's own side, the Sravakayana is perfected. By realizing the nature of all appearances and mental states of the three realms as [301] dependently related events, the Pratyekabuddhayana is perfected. By ascertaining that appearances are not other than the mind, the Cittamatrayana is perfected. By realizing the meaning of the two types of identitylessness, the Perfection of Wisdom is perfected; by sealing samsara and nirvana with the Spirit of Awakening, the Bodhisattvayana is perfected; and by that very

realization of samsara and nirvana as great emptiness becoming the universal ground of all middle ways, those are all perfected.

By not confounding one's actions and conduct with the ordinary, the Kriyayana is perfected; by behaving such that one's view and conduct are nondual, the Caryatantrayana is perfected; by recognizing the view as being of greatest importance, the Yogayana is perfected; by realizing the nondual reality of the deity and one's own appearance, the whole of the Mahayogayana is perfected; by realizing the nonduality of the absolute nature and primordial wisdom, the whole of the Anuyana is perfected; by letting all that appears to the mind vanish with modification, just as it is, the Mind Division [of Atiyoga] is perfected; and by realizing the nonduality of the absolute nature and awareness, the Expanse Division Yana is perfected in the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground.

The realization just how all the Dharmas of those yanas are perfected [302] is called the Secret Precept Yana. Since that is the great, universal ground of all the yanas, and since all grounds and paths are simultaneously perfected, it is called the Supreme Yana of the Great Perfection, which synthesizes the essence. For other yanas are merely facets of the Great Perfection, and those who adhere to

their own yana are certainly limited, like taking a drop from the ocean and maintaining that as the ocean. The vinaya and the Sravakayana are for those with low-inferior faculties; the Pratyekabuddhayana is for those with medium-inferior faculties; the Bodhisattvayana is for those with high-inferior faculties; the Kriyayana is for those with low-middling faculties; the Upayayana is for those of medium-middling faculties; the Yogayana is for those with high-middling faculties; Mahayoga is for those with low-superior faculties; Anuyoga is for those with medium-superior faculties; and the three divisions of Atiyoga are for those with high-superior faculties. Among them, the Mind Division Yana is taught to those with low-superior faculties; the Expanse Division Yana is taught to those with medium-superior faculties; and the Secret Precept Division is taught to the highest of the high.

In accordance with each individual's own faculties and merit, it is taught that a single person may proceed along the grounds and paths of liberation. [303] On the other hand, even though there are no differences in quality or magnitude in the fundamental minds of sentient beings, one speaks as if there were differences in the quality of their faculties due to their domination by self-grasping and their resultant failure to realize the meaning of identitylessness. The succession of yanas is taught as a path of gradual procession, like walking up a staircase. Know that it is not as if some were on the ground floor, utterly incapable of ascending due to a closed skylight; nor is it as if some were up above from the outset, so that they need not descend, like planets and stars that have risen into the sky. Rather, by the power of one's previous training, whatever yana one encounters, one's karmic momentum for that will gradually be aroused.

O Vidyavajra, in this reality-itself of the primordially pure Great Perfection called the dharmakaya awareness that is present as the ground, seven wisdoms are naturally perfected. These are the seven:

1. The one-taste nature of all phenomena included in the universe of samsara and nirvana, as displays of the suchness of reality-itself, is veiled by afflictive and cognitive obscurations, so it is reduced to something ethically neutral. In contrast to the delusion of the mind succumbing to dualistic grasping, by investigating and analyzing the nature of existence of things, one recognizes their non-objective, open nature. [304] That is called discerning wisdom. That realizes the emptiness of every single phenomenon that seems to appear from its own side.

2. Finally, stabilization in the mind-stream that ascertains the identitylessness and emptiness of all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana is called the wisdom of realizing identitylessness. That utterly dissolves the grasping onto the reality of appearances.

3. Truly knowing the manner in which all the Dharmas of the path and fruition are naturally perfected in the ground itself is called the wisdom of knowing reality as it is.

4. Planets and stars in the ocean appearing due to the limpidity and

clarity of the water, and the entire animate and inanimate universe and sensory objects appearing from the limpidity and clarity of space do not appear in the absence of that limpidity and clarity. And just as reflections do not appear without the limpidity and clarity of a mirror, appearances of the whole of samsara and nirvana would not occur without the limpidity and clarity of the ground. Thus, by apprehending that limpidity and clarity as real things, appearances occur. Truly realizing that is an unsurpassed feature of the Great Perfection.

As an analogy, the planets and stars in the ocean are not different from the water, and the entire animate and inanimate universe is not different from space. [305] Likewise, there is nothing in the whole of samsara and nirvana that is not unified with and pervaded by the primordial wisdom of the awareness of reality-itself. That is called pervasive, all-seeing, great wisdom, and it perceives the whole of samsara and nirvana like reflections of the moon in water. Realizing that with great wisdom, one remains in this profundity within oneself.

5. By apprehending the ground itself as the ground,58 the samsara of impure karma is released into the absolute nature, and one's own face of the dharmakaya is perceived. That is called the wisdom of release. By totally disengaging from all activity , one dwells in inactivity.

6. All clinging onto the appearances of the samsara of impure, dualistic grasping is forcefully unified with the great, pure equality, so that is called the wisdom of unification. One knows the homogenous non- existence of all good and bad and of all objects of hope and fear.

7. By realizing all phenomena as expressions of the one great emptiness, the whole of delusive samsara of impure karma and mental afflictions is totally vanquished and incinerated, so that is called the wisdom of vanquishing. It perceives emptiness and fathoms its depths.

O son of good breeding, great wisdom is like the fire at the end of the eon, which destroys the cosmos. [306] Like dry grass burned in a

fire, all karma, mental afflictions, habitual propensities, and delusive appearances are incinerated in reality-itself, which transcends causality. Great wisdom is like the sun rising in the sky, utterly dispelling all the darkness of ignorance. Great wisdom is like space, for it makes one comprehend all sublime Dharmas just as [space] penetrates the animate and inanimate universe. In the first instant, blind sentient

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58 The meaning here is that by apprehending where one is in one's practice, by recognizing the ground (Tib. sa) one stands on, one is ready to proceed further in one's practice.

beings are tormented and entrapped in the sufferings of samsarra and the miserable states of existence, and mental afflictions and habitual propensities become like a sack of poison. In the second instant, simply by identifying great wisdom, they become equal in fortune to the dharmakaya, Samantabhadra, and they become worthy of the homage, worship, and devotion of myriads of living beings, including the gods. They become fields of merit and the foremost of assemblies. This destroys eons of impure karma, and that is ultimate.

Conventionally, it is said there are seven conflagrations at the end of the eon that destroy the cosmos. There are seven pure energies of primordial wisdom. These are those seven energies: [307]

1. Dispersive energy courses through each of the domains of the mental states and appearances of the impure cycle of existence, and it dissolves into emptiness one's clinging onto them as permanent, stable, and immutable. It extends out to all appearing objects and enables one to recognize their lack of true existence.

2. The whole of samsara and nirvana is permeated by the ground, and the pervasive energy causes that ground to become manifest. By leaving it in its own state, without meditating, one's own essential nature is perceived.

3. The binding energy of wisdom is so called, for it fastens the avenues of the impure mind to emptiness, the great center; and it

apprehends one's own nature in great, intellect-transcending ineffability.

4. The apprehending energy of skillful means embraces reality-itself, free of conceptual elaboration in the great, primordial rest that transcends the intellect; and it merges continuously with ineffability.

5. The energy that destroys the cosmos is so called, for in the end it dissolves all these appearances into great, non-objective, primordially pure

reality-itself, and annihilates them; and it casts them into the great extinction of phenomena, which transcends the intellect.

6. The merciless, karmic energy of the eon is so called, for, due to the all pervasive movement of this energy of primordial wisdom, the vitality of samsara is cut off and cast into the absolute nature of nirvana. Mental states and appearances arise as emptiness, and finally they are cast into the absolute nature, in which delusion is unknown. [308]

7. The fire-accompanying energy is so called, for it utterly eradicates the darkness of ignorance and totally incinerates all karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities. Banishing mental afflictions and ideation into the absolute nature, the vitality of omniscience courses as primordial wisdom.

Thus, the seven great energies of pure, primordial wisdom slay the karmic energies right where they are. Due to the movement and resting of the energies of primordial wisdom in their own place, one swiftly reaches the state of omniscient, perfect Spiritual Awakening.

Thus, the luminosity of the essential nature, emptiness, is called wisdom, and its power of self-illumination is called energy. This demonstrates the manner in which the whole range of paths and fruitions are perfected in the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground. So that one may recognize the supremacy of the spiritual vehicle of the clear light Great Perfection, the essential points of this one vehicle are repeated again and again; for if they were not taught, they would not be correctly realized. That is why

they are taught in this way. Consequently, future disciples will fathom these essential points and all doubts will be vanquished. That is called the essential nature, or core, of meditation, the razor that cuts off error, [309] the sole eye of primordial wisdom, and the vast expanse of the space of the view. Know this!

As for the blind who are ignorant of this, the reason why they do not ascend beyond the higher realms, regardless of how much they meditate, is that they do not recognize or know the primordially pure ground, the all-pervasive nature of being. Ignorance is the delusive ground of the three realms, so they do not ascend beyond the cycle of existence. Genuine knowledge of the nondual, one taste of the great, original, primordial ground of samsara and nirvana is called the primordial wisdom of awareness. Know that all the collections of virtue created by that ground are solely results of omniscient, perfect Spiritual Awakening!"

Bodhisattva Vidyavajra then commented, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, over lifetimes from beginningless time up to the present, due to the cause of ignorance and the contributing condition of dualistic grasping, blind sentient beings of the three realms continuously, incessantly cling to delusive cycles in the endless abodes of samsara. Under the domination of the condensed contaminations of habitual propensities within the shell of ignorance, [310] they are oppressed by great burdens of suffering. But by the power of wisdom and primordial wisdom, the shell of habitual propensities is opened up.

Before awakening from the slumber of ignorance, one reifies the delusive sense of experiencing the miseries of the cycle of existence and the miserable states of existence, which were in fact not experienced. Considering the way one clings to experiences, this is laughable! How so? While the bases of designations are not established, different names are designated upon non-objective emptiness, and in that way one deceives oneself. Ha ha! All appearing phenomena are like mirages taken to be water, and like an illusory festival that one takes to be permanent and clings to it, as if it were one's own possession. Former appearances vanish and later ones arise, with no enduring presence, but by not noticing this, one

is bewildered, Ha ha!

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Not recognizing the problem that appearances arise and transform with no stability, one takes pride in one's accumulated possessions as if they were one's eternal wealth. Ha ha!

When one sees samsara and nirvana as the open, non-objective nature of great emptiness, [311] all the buddhas and buddha-fields that are taken to be objects in the animate and inanimate universe fall into an abyss. Ha ha!

When one sees that all animate and inanimate worlds with all their sense objects are totally groundless and rootless like a dream and an illusion, and when one sees that they seem to exist even though they do not, and that they simultaneously emerge and vanish in an instant like a flash of lightning, the cycle of samsara is blown away by the wind. Ha ha!

Not recognizing the fact that over beginningless lifetimes one's own nature has never wavered even for an instant from the primordially pure, absolute nature of reality, it seems that one comes and goes and moves about in the cycle of existence. Ha ha!

Not recognizing the fact that over beginningless lifetimes one's own appearances arise to oneself, and apart from them there has never been even an iota of any sensory object, one takes the experienced appearances onto which one clings as being other than oneself; then one is constantly deluded by taking on hopes and fears. Ha ha!

When one encounters one's own face as the great, original, primordial ground, one awakens to the unimpeded non-objectivity of all faults and habitual propensities. Ha ha!

When one sees the absolute nature of the ground, free of conceptual elaboration, the aid and injury brought about by gods and demons and by friends and enemies vanish without a trace. Ha ha!

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When the darkness of not knowing the absolute nature of the ground

[312] is replaced by knowledge, Spiritual Awakening is not achieved by the good of meditation nor does one wander in the cycle of existence due to the deficiency of not meditating. Ha ha!

When the ground dharmakaya. the Omnipresent Lord, Samantabhadra becomes manifest, one effortlessly attains the kingdom of the dharmakaya. Ha ha!

When one gains mastery over the primordial wisdom of awareness free of extremes, without needing to view or consider all sentient beings of the three realms, and without needing to exert strenuous effort, one simultaneously Awakens to reality-itself, the absolute nature that transcends causality. Ha ha!

When one gains mastery over the primordial wisdom of awareness free of extremes, every single one of the innumerable mandalas of the jinas are perfected and actualized as one taste, without convergence or divergence. Ha ha!

When the pure, homogenous displays of samsara and nirvana and the dharmakaya, awareness that is present as the ground, are perceived, one instantly becomes perfectly Awakened, without reliance upon the stages of the grounds and paths. Ha ha!"

By hearing the sound of the words of that great vajra laughter, one will fathom the real, absolute nature, and realize those vast and profound points.

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Bodhisattva Vidyavajra then asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, omnipresent Lord, Immutable Sovereign, [313] original buddha of the ground, how does one practice the path of your nature, called the Great Perfection? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O son of good breeding, this is the way to practice the path of my nature, the Great Perfection. To proceed along the grounds and paths of liberation in this life, first you must know the reasons for the difficulty of obtaining a precious human life of leisure and endowment, and those reasons must be firmly imprinted in your mind-stream. In terms of the demarcation between samsara and nirvana, if you do not practice Dharma right now, you will not

encounter the grounds and paths of liberation later on; and even if you meet with them, you will find it difficult to know how to put them into practice. It is difficult to encounter a spiritual mentor, or sublime spiritual friend, who can introduce you [to awareness]. It is very difficult to have the freedom to practice, and it is hard to assemble all the necessities of life and things [needed for practice]. Except for right now, the methods for gaining freedom from the imprisoning pit of the miseries of samsara will not come along again. Knowing this, you must see that your spiritual practice engages with the path.

Recognizing that the time of your death is unpredictable, [314] consider that the thunderbolt of death may strike at any time and in any situation, so right now you are on the verge of being catapulted away from the human realm to some other realm. Bearing in mind all the miseries that will be experienced at that time, give this command to your own mind: Today I will leave everything behind, including my parents, relatives, home, and possessions, so they will remain just as they are. From now on, I will not even hear their names, I will not see even a fraction of them, and I will never return here again. When the time of my departure comes, I will have no freedom to avoid going to a destination in

which for eons I will be tossed about by waves of suffering, without the slightest bit of happiness, and I will be brought before the agents of the Lord of Death. A great hurricane of the winds of karma will push me from behind, the faces of all my relatives, children, and spouse will be covered with tears; and their terrible cries of lamentation will aggravate my misery. Unable to let them go, when I desperately, pathetically proceed alone, with no companion, to an unknown destination, who will accompany me? Who will help carry the burden of my misery? Who will come to my rescue? Who will experience for me that unbearable suffering? What benefit will there be from the non-virtuous, evil karma I have accumulated for the sake of my children, relatives, and friends? [315] They will never recall my kindness.

Considering the examples of yourself and others, if in this life you don't even set out on the path to liberation, whatever you do will

have no benefit whatsoever. The time of your death is unknown. If everyone, including children, the young and the old, must die, and if there is no way of determining when you will die, then without procrastination you should quickly know the reasons for the need to practice the profound, quintessential instructions on the sublime, supreme spiritual vehicle for gaining liberation in one lifetime. And you must apply yourself to them assiduously.

If you ignore death, the thought of Dharma will subside, and you will fall under the domination of spiritual sloth, distractions, amusements, and hankering for material gain. In that way your life will pass in vain, and you will slip into death as an ordinary being, then fall into the endless cycle of existence. The recollection of impermanence and death, by considering these points again and again, is the unsurpassed, fundamental ground of the path to liberation. Without this, like a person who is blind and crippled, you succumb to detrimental karma

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and situations, so even if you practice Dharma, it will be feeble and will naturally unravel like a knot in a horse's tail. So know this!

Knowing those two points and applying them to one's mind-stream, one should reflect upon karma and its consequences. Bearing in mind the consequence of hatred is [316] hell, just count the number of deeds you have committed that were motivated by hatred! Do you sense that you will be a visitor in hell? Bearing in mind that the consequence of attachment is the preta realm, just look at your own attachment; and if you count the number of deeds you have committed under its influence, do you understand that you will be a visitor in the realm of pretas? Bearing in mind that the consequence of delusion is the animal realm, if you examine the various foul deeds generated by that cause, you will find that you have been pursuing the path leading to becoming a visitor in the animal realm. Do you understand that your own realm is definitely within the cycle of existence? Actions motivated by jealousy lead to the realm of asuras, and if you reflect upon the ways you have accumulated karma motivated by thoughts of jealousy, you will see that the guests of the asuras pursue the causes of that realm, and they return to their

own realm again and again. Do you understand ?

Evil, non-virtuous deeds motivated by the three poisons of the afflicted mind include the three bodily non-virtues of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct, [317] the four verbal non-virtues of lying, slander, idle gossip, and abuse, and the three mental non-virtues of avarice, malice, and false views. The power of all these is generated by their causal motivations, and thus the appearances of the three miserable states of existence emerge. In particular, if your samayas degenerate regarding the root of Secret Mantra, your spiritual mentor and friends, you must fall to the excruciating realm known as Vajra-hell; so bear in mind that it is crucial to know those samayas. If you think that no

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faults are incurred for those who do not know them, you are wrong. Those who are ignorant of them do not recognize whether or not their samayas have degenerated, so they do not take the opportunity to confess and purify them. In them great faults unceasingly occur, and the consequences of their evil deeds stemming from their ignorance and lack of awareness manifest in their own time. This is like losing all one's accumulated food and possessions due to one's ignorance of the presence of a thief. There is not the slightest difference between that and knowingly being robbed of them by a bandit in broad daylight. Likewise, in terms of the karmic consequences and the experience of suffering, [318] there is not even the slightest difference between those who are knowledgeable and those who are not. Those who know the samayas immediately understand when an infraction occurs, and by confessing it, they either purify it or diminish its harm. Those who do not know the samayas are unaware of infractions when they occur, so they continue to compound all their faults, downfalls, and broken samayas. By so doing, the infractions grow and increase, and they are never purified.

O son of good breeding, until you reach the state of the great, intellect transcending extinction of phenomena, examine the manner in which karma ripens, without ever simply disappearing, and unerringly practice adopting virtues and abstaining from vices. Recognize the tremendous importance of this, and guard it as you do

your own life. In particular, you must bear in mind the importance of abstaining from even the subtlest of vices and non-virtues. If you do not, and you become confused with regard to non-virtuous conduct, gradually the power of evil deeds will grow until eventually, due to the subtle relation between actions and their results, various contaminations of habitual propensities will combine, enormous consequences will emerge, and they will

inexorably carry you away. Therefore, knowledge of the significance of actions and their consequences is like eyes that enable you to see the path.

Upon considering the nature of suffering of the cycle of existence, recognize that the cycle of existence is like a fire-pit, like a viper's nest, and like [319] a land of raksasas, without the slightest opportunity for happiness, and apply yourself to the pursuit of liberation. Bear in mind the indispensability of generating that attitude before engaging in the practice of Dharma. For those who do not train their minds in that way, even if they try to implement the profound practical instructions, as soon as difficulties and little things like hunger and thirst occur, they give up and fail to carry the practice through to its culmination. Thus, after you have first trained in the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind, it is vital that you bear these in mind constantly, without forgetting them, at all times and in all situations. Doing so is the unsurpassed crown-jewel of all Dharma practitioners.

Now as for the main practice, genuine knowledge and realization of the one taste of the whole of samsara and nirvana in the ocean of the original ground is called the view of the vast expanse of space, and that entails the manifestation of your own nature as the dharmakaya, devoid of signs. As for meditation, throughout beginningless lifetimes in the cycle of existence, the original, primordial ground, Samantabhadra, has pervaded the mind-streams of all sentient beings, just as sesame oil pervades sesame seeds. However, under the influence of dualistic grasping and clinging to true existence, the mind becomes dimmed, as if by darkness, and deluded. [320] But now, apart from identifying your own nature, there is nothing whatsoever on which to meditate, and you gain freedom for yourself.

As a result of holding your own ground, freedom is experienced in the domain of pristine space, unstructured and unmodified by the

intellect; and you are infinitely immersed in great, self-arisen, primordial rest. This is like space merging with space.

Previously, your intellect demarcated outer from inner and grasped onto them as being distinct. Now you ascertain that there is no outer and inner, and you come upon the nature of great, all-pervasive openness, and that is called meditation free of the intellect and devoid of activity. In the state of such meditation, motionlessly rest your body, without modifying it, like a corpse in a charnel ground. Not modifying the voice entails dispensing with all speech and recitations, as if your voice were a lute on which the strings have been severed. Not modifying the mind entails naturally releasing it in the state of primordial being, without altering it in any way. These three involve dispensing with activities of the body, speech, and mind and settling in meditative equipoise that is devoid of activity .For that reason, this is called meditative equipoise.

Whenever engaging in any kind of physical or verbal activity such as eating, lying down, walking, sitting, or being in the marketplace or crowds of people, maintain the constant awareness of ascertaining ail things as displays of the nonduality of samsara and nirvana, without ever losing the power of this view. [321] Never waver from the state of manifest awareness, devoid of action, in which the inner depths of meditation are not forsaken. Abstain from the sins of nonvirtuous actions as if they were poison, never allowing your conduct to slip into carelessness. As for your physical conduct, act slowly and serenely, firmly and resolutely, like a clay statue. When walking, move deliberately, taking each step in an easygoing manner. Let your demeanor be like that of a lion, without turning your head around or glancing quickly to the right or left. When rising, get up slowly, not abruptly, and when eating, chew and swallow deliberately, not like a yak gobbling down grass. When conversing with others, abstain from flippant speech, and speak gently and slowly. Adjust your speech

so that you express the truth, speaking pleasantly and deliberately, without disturbing the minds of others. Let your mind be calm, subdued, and spacious, without succumbing to emotional vacillations. Having kind thoughts and great altruism and speaking and behaving without deviousness or self aggrandizement is the way to bring your mind to Dharma. [322]

In particular, as a sign of your own great defects you may see everyone as being flawed, without perceiving anyone as being faultless. This perception is like that of people seeing everything as snakes as a result of have eaten dhadhura, or those suffering from a bile disorder seeing a conch as yellow. People seen and experienced as being different from yourself are invariably perceived as being imperfect, while you see no faults in those who are close to you, such as your brothers, sisters, nephews, and uncles. They are invariably regarded as being good. That is seeing your own side as divine and the other side as demonic. Stop it! View everyone as being flawless, and recognize all defects as your own. That is a crucial aspect of your conduct. When you possess status and prestige, do not disregard all those who are weak, powerless, impoverished, or timid; for if you fail to behave amicably with everyone, there is the possibility that such misfortune will eventually befall you, and they will all rise up against you in anger. As conditions degenerate, all those in positions of royalty, power, and wealth eventually fall to inferior stations and poverty. Upon examining this matter, bear no malice toward anyone. [323] That is crucial.

When high status, prestige, and affluence come your way, adopt a sense of humility and overcome any sense of pride; and when you find yourself meeting misfortune and terrible surroundings, do not let your inner strength wane, but bring forth the inner depths of your view and meditation; and release your consciousness without an object, as if you were an insane person who has become agitated. Moreover, knowing appearances to be like illusions and

dreams is another crucial aspect of your conduct. On occasions of joy and happiness, avoid self-conscious pride, and at times of hunger, cold, and thirst, bring forth the strength of your mind and the

depths of the view. Do not utter words of abuse or slander toward anyone, but apply yourself to equanimity. On the other hand, do not flatter others either, but remain at rest, for the end result of reviling and glorifying others is that when those you have praised offend you, you will want to put them down, and when those you have insulted support you, you will be compelled to commend them. Then others will ridicule you, and your own flaws will become apparent.

If you deny the excellent qualities and speak of the faults of your enemies and opponents, even though everyone knows of their talents and virtues, others will become disgusted with you and think of these problems as your own. [324] Thus, since your abusive words inflict no harm [upon your enemies], stop saying them. Moreover, by extolling the virtues of your defective friends and relatives, everyone will despise and ridicule you. Thus, the importance of avoiding that is another crucial aspect of your conduct.

As a result of lying, you fall into disgrace, everyone despises you as if you were dog meat, no matter what you say, people take it to be a lie, and you do not make it to the rank of a human being. If you steal or break an oath, even though others may pretend not to know about it, secretly they all come to gossip about it and vilify you for it; so abstain from such conduct. If you engage in disgusted, adversarial contempt or abuse toward any spiritual mentor or teacher, your path to liberation will be blocked, and this will become an enormous weight bearing you down to the miserable states of existence. As taught in the tantras, the scriptures, and practical instructions, even at the cost of your life and body, do not succumb to the slightest bit of such behavior. This is the root of Dharma, so bear it in mind as something of the geatest importance.

By being attracted and addicted to talking and gossiping and seeing benefit in savoring words, your life may be spent in vain, and for the most part such talk becomes the basis for bickering, disputation, and irritation. This is pointless, so dispense with such entertainment and apply yourself to meditation. Even if you had a galaxy filled with food and wealth, you would never be satisfied, so for the duration [325] of this human life, which is but a momentary dream, you should be content simply that you are not dying of starvation,

regardless of how much food you have; and be satisfied with being protected from the elements, regardless of the quality of your clothes. For the most part, food and clothing are detrimental objects of attachment which at the time of death lead to rebirth as demons. They are called possessions because they possess you to take birth in miserable states of existence and the cycle of existence, so even their name indicates their causal influence. Friends venture forth into Dharma, taking their own measure of things, without heeding anyone's advice. No one but a qualified spiritual mentor can provide them with counsel that will be of lasting benefit to them, so heed your spiritual mentor's guidance as a life-long pledge.

Think of sentient beings who constantly strive with great diligence and courage, enduring all manner of hardships, for projects that cast them down into the endless cycle of existence. With them in mind, willingly accept the hardships involved in applying yourself to methods that bring eternal bliss. Cast behind you that which is easy. Set up your body and vitality as targets. Sacrifice your flesh and blood as food. If you do not constantly apply yourself to generating courage and fortitude, arouse yourself by thinking, "I shall die in awhile." Whatever Dharma you practice, attend to the benefit of all sentient beings and apply yourself wholeheartedly to arduous virtues, without showing off or using pretense in order to gain others' admiration or praise. [326]

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As for your pledges and vows, be guileless. Do not disparage Dharma or individuals. Treating everyone impartially, without fawning on those in high positions or denigrating those in low positions, is the conduct of Dharma practitioners. Do not deceive others. Do not offend the faithful. Do not beguile the minds of those applying themselves to virtue. Do not partake of the food and wealth meant for those practicing in meditative retreat. By diligently applying yourself to practice, without letting the practical guidance you have received fade away, qualified spiritual mentors will not rebuke you. By being completely candid about your pledges and vows, the gods and guardians will not rebuke you. By saturating your life with Dharma, without pretense or hypocrisy, you will have no cause to rebuke yourself. That is the practice of the jinas, and their followers should maintain this as the best of practices. For the

duration of this fleeting human life, there is no time or leisure for pursuing such things as high status, power, or wealth. Abstain from self-praise and pretense motivated by the desire for fame and status, and hold in your heart the awareness of your own mortality. Never forsaking the precious Three Jewels is the sublime foundation and root of the practice. Modify your physical and verbal conduct in those ways, and be on guard not to fall into carelessness. Attend to this! Realize it! Cleave to it! That is the crucial guidance for post-meditative experience. [327] Carrying through with the practice of meditative equipoise and post-meditative practice in the above manner until you die is the sublime essence of the practice.

As for the essence of your conduct, do not forsake the view in the midst of your daily activities. Even though you strive in cultivating physical and verbal virtues and accumulate an enormous amount of merit, if you discard the practice of the profound view and meditation, when you face death you will do so as an ordinary person; and your practice will have sustained and compounded the

cycle of existence. Thus, you may experience merely the temporary joys of gods and humans, but the fruits of liberation will remain beyond reach. Thus, due to that failure you will remain in bondage. Therefore, once you have achieved the stability of confidence in the profound view and meditation, virtuous qualities of the body and speech that can be seen or heard cannot replace the authentic view and meditation. As an analogy, when the lion, king of beasts, haughtily gazes out over the snowy mountains, no other creature can stand up to him. You must recognize the importance of not allowing the view and meditation to be lost as you come under other influences. If you lose the view in the midst of your daily activities, know that this is like a king losing his realm to someone else. [328]

If you forsake proper conduct in favor of the view, you will fall under the influence of negligence, like maras and rudras, and out of your addiction to activities of the cycle of existence, a great current of sinful actions will emerge, resulting in false views regarding the Three Jewels and disregard for the moral consequences of your actions. As you fail to implement the ultimate view and meditation, you will not even have the means to accumulate merit for attaining

the state of gods or humans. That is like veering from a path on which you are seeking healing medicinal herbs and running into a plant that is poisonous to the touch. In such a case, it is said that friends turn into maras. It is the profound view that cures the terrible chronic disease of the sufferings of the cycle of existence, but if it leads your mind onto paths of iniquity, it will make you experience the endless miseries of samsara. The remedy for ignorance is knowledge, and the remedy for samsara is the view and meditation; but as a result of not implementing them, if they result in your mind becoming filled with misconceptions and behavior contrary to

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Dharma, emptiness goes awry, and there is no remedy for that. Thus, it is crucial for you to know that.

In summary, at all times and in all situations let your behavior be calm, subdued, and conscientious, and continually guard your pledges and vows. [329] Avoid sinful, nonvirtuous deeds as if they were poison. With no other virtue to practice, apply yourself assiduously to the profound view and meditation, striving in this essential practice for your whole life. By constraining your mind as if you had come into the presence of the premier of judges, recognize the importance of restraint. Until you reach the state of the extinction into reality-itself, you must correctly avoid the bad and adopt the good in terms of actions and their consequences. Until you attain the four types of fearless confidence that are indications of having attained liberation, suffering will result from nonvirtue, and joy will result from virtue. This can be known by investigating and carefully reflecting upon the nature of the cycle of existence and delusion as you have been constantly addicted to experiencing the cycle of delusive experiences during beginningless lifetimes right up to the present. Even though you have an ocean of knowledge acquired from hearing, if you have no practice of profound meditation, you are like a person who returns empty-handed from an island of jewels, and you will die as an ordinary person and continue wandering in the cycle of existence. Therefore, with diligent meditation apply yourself to the essential practice.

Thus, when you are engaging in practice, whether an unprecedented, soothing sense of bliss arises, or a pristine sense of clarity , or a nebulous nonconceptuality, if you take this to be genuine meditation and cling to it as the fulfillment of your hopes, or if you regard those as areas of danger and block them, or if you alter them with you mind, such practice entailing hopes and fears will lead you astray. In contrast, once you have recognized the nature of

existence of meditative experiences, by letting them be in their own state, without attachment, craving, rejection, or affirmation, they will vanish altogether, like mist disappearing into the sky, and the primordial wisdom of awareness will become manifest.

You may perceive various disagreeable forms of gods and demons, different kinds of pleasant and unpleasant sounds, various foul odors, disagreeable tastes, various kinds of tactile sensation:;, and you may have nightmares and wake up at times in a panic. Those experiences may bring forth different types of distress in your heart and mind. Due to your diet, environment, or trauma, illnesses may arise, and merely as a result of coming into contact with soil, rocks, wood, or weapons, you may come down with afflictions difficult to heal. Various bad omens, such as sores, leprosy, or ulcers, may occur as apparitions created by gods or demons, which arise from external sources. Any of the four hundred and four classes of illnesses of wind, bile, phlegm and combinations of them may arise, and--as if the entire might and strength of your mind had seeped away into them--inexpressible suffering may occur .Those are called physical illnesses, which arise from within.

With respect to objects of the mind, you may experience happiness, attachment, hatred, craving, unbearable suffering, delight, clinging to the experience of emptiness and luminosity, a sense of sheer vacuity in which appearances and the mind cease, paranoia that everything you see or feel is out to harm you, or the pride of thinking, 'There is no contemplative on earth who has a view and meditation like mine.' Under the influence of anger and malice, you may disturb the minds of others, and afterwards feel remorse. You may feel that everything you have done is wonderful, and consequently feel free to do whatever you like. Such indeterminate experiences of joy and sorrow are called joys and sorrows due to the mysterious impulses in the mind. Know that

all such sensations are deceptive experiences that occur as signs along the path; [332] and, without attachment, craving, rejection, affirmation, hope, fear, or modification, leave them as they are. By so doing, they will release themselves. Hold this knowledge to be of

the highest importance.

If your meditative experience leads to illness and you compound this by interpreting this as being due to demonic influence, no matter how much you devote yourself to magic rituals for dispelling obstacles, or to medical treatment, that will only harm you, without bringing any benefit. However much you try, you will not get even the slightest bit of benefit. Eventually, if the sentry of identifying the meditative experience is lost, you will go insane, pass out, faint, or become as ignorant as an animal, or this might lead to your own death. In the past there have been many faithful students who kept their pledges and vows, and there have always been spiritual mentors who became siddhas, so they knew the various dispositions and faculties of specific students; and they led them to the state of the Jina Vajradhara in one lifetime and with one body. Even when they are not led astray by anyone, nowadays students invariably fail to keep their pledges, they have little faith or reverence, and they are barbaric and prone to false views. Blind teachers hanker after meditative experiences and give teachings and make their students meditate so that they objectify and cling onto views and meditation. [333] Consequently, instead of identifying the occurrences of mere pleasure and pain and comfort and distress as meditative experiences, due to their ignorance of the differences between experiences that arise from external and internal sources, they say they are due to demonic influences, thus misleading their own students. Such illegitimate teachers are certain to become maras for their students.

Due to specific dispositions and faculties, experiences may arise solely from external sources without any internal source; they may arise solely from

internal sources and from no external or mysterious sources; or they may arise solely from mysterious sources and from no external or internal source. Thus, it is especially crucial that you must know how to distinguish among those. Nowadays, during this degenerate era, when the teachings of the Buddha have fallen into decline, some teachers say to sustain awareness on the movements [of the mind], and since even they have no experience or realization from that, the

lives of all such teachers and their disciples are vainly spent doing that, and they die as ordinary people. That has happened many times. Some teachers remain absorbed in a relaxed, gentle state of joy and tell others this is the culmination of the view and meditation; and they get stuck there. Other teachers experience a sense of luminosity, seeing gods and demons, [334] and becoming absorbed in a steady vividness of the mind and appearances, they teach that to others. Some become absorbed in a pristine, nonconceptual sense of emptiness, in which there is no memory or appearances, and they teach that to others. Others become absorbed in an unceasing, unstructured state of consciousness, and teach this to others as the best view and meditation. Those who identify the view and meditation in those ways do not rise above the three realms, for they have not realized the view of emptiness. They are imprisoned by that failing, and consequently they do not see the grounds or paths of liberation and omniscience. Some people idle away their whole lives by being addicted to ragged books and oral explanations, so when death suddenly comes upon them, they lack even the slightest confidence of fearlessness. Those who become fixated solely on hearing and teaching take pride in their affluence and status in this life. As for those who become entranced for their whole lives by delusive appearances and mental states and those who become captivated by the knowledge gained from hearing and by teaching, there is no qualitative difference in the objects of their craving, just as there is no difference between

being bound by gold fetters and rope fetters. Everything that you cling to acts solely as a cause for the bondage of your own mind-stream.

First you should come to know the critical points and narratives concerning the vast view and meditation. Finally, you should sincerely dedicate yourself to essential practice, [335] and you will reach the state of liberation without getting caught up in pitfalls and errors. In that way, hearing strikes the core. Otherwise, if your pride and sense of self-importance increase due to hearing and understanding through hearing teachings many times, everything you see will become an object for false views and invalid denials and superimpositions; not even the slightest faith or reverence will

arise in your mind-stream; and you will be filled with the pomposity of thinking, 'There's not a single person like me!' With contempt for others, you will abuse them, and upon hearing or witnessing other renowned people teaching, the power of fierce pride will arise, and out of a sense of jealousy, you will superimpose faults that are not present and deny excellent qualities that are present. For such people, learning turns into poison, and the foundation is laid for rebirth in a miserable state of existence.

Therefore, from the very beginning scrutinize such teachers and avoid them. Do not depend upon them! Regard as a buddha any spiritual mentor from whom you have received as little as a single verse of instruction, and do nothing to displease him even for an instant. If you do displease your spiritual mentor, you are abandoning all the buddhas of the three times, so no meditative experiences, realizations, or excellent qualities will arise in your mind-stream. Even if merit is accumulated, its fruits will not arise. Even if you engage in practices involving deities and their mandalas, {336] you will actualize nothing but demons and spirits who cause you to break your pledges. The seeds of liberation will dry up and will not bear fruit. The trunk of omniscience will rot

and its leaves will not grow. Once you have received empowerment and three lines of guidance, even from a non-Buddhist Samkhya, revere him as the foremost of spiritual mentors and never withdraw your reverence.

When you are sitting, you may take refuge in the [Three] Jewels by imagining your spiritual mentor on the crown of your head. When you are walking, visualize your mentor on your right shoulder and imagine you are circumambulating him. That is far superior to circumambulating all the jinas of the three times. When you are partaking of food and drink, visualize your mentor at your throat, and eat your food, imagining it to be ambrosia. Thus, whatever you eat will become a ganacakra offering and a fire offering. When you are meditating and when you are lying down, visualize your mentor at your heart, and by merging your mind with his, you will experience the nonconceptual primordial wisdom of reality-itself; and extraordinary realizations will arise in your mind-stream. When

you are practicing, if you imagine [yourself] as being of the nature of the deity and protector, you will not falsely reify the stage of generation, and a myriad of supreme and common siddhis and enlightened activities will arise. Likewise, if you depend upon a sublime spiritual mentor without violating [this relationship], that is the supreme gist of spiritual conduct."

Bodhisattva Vidyavajra then commented, [337] "If all the paths and fruitions were originally, primordially, completely present in awareness, all sentient beings would certainly have come to the view of the Great Perfection. So what is the difference [between buddhas and sentient beings]? May the Teacher explain!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, it is not as you say. There is no difference between all the buddhas and all sentient beings other than that the former are

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aware and the latter are not. Thus, all sentient beings apprehend their own appearances as being other than themselves and thus become deluded. All the buddhas perceive the pure equality of samsara and nirvana, and thus became Awakened. Therefore, awareness is the great, original, primordially pure ground, and it recognizes samsara and nirvana as displays of pure equality .The reality-itself of awareness to which that character manifests is inconceivable primordial wisdom."

Bodhisattva Vidyavajra then commented, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, if one takes the primordial wisdom of awareness as the path, how is liberation attained? What advantages are there in that?"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, once you have gained mastery over the primordial wisdom of awareness, if you meditate uninterruptedly, you will attain liberation in this life and with this body, and you will become a buddha. If one person who had accumulated much karma from the five deeds of immediate retribution [338] and another person who had practiced the stage of generation for his whole life were both to identify awareness simultaneously and meditate upon it--since the mind-itself is not contaminated by faults or virtues--one would not become enlightened even an instant before the other. That

is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

If one person who had engaged in evil, non-virtuous conduct in this life and another who had accumulated merit his whole life were both to identify awareness simultaneously and practice that--since awareness transcends cause and effect--one would not become enlightened even an instant before the other. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

If one person who had cultivated profound meditative stabilization in this life and another who had fallen under the influence of distraction his whole life were both to identify awareness simultaneously and practice that--since there

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are no distinctions of good or bad in awareness--one would not become enlightened even an instant before the other. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

If one person who had trained in the Generation of the Spirit and dedicated himself to the welfare of others his whole life and another who had applied himself to deeds injurious to others his whole life were both to identify the nature of awareness simultaneously and practice that--since awareness is liberated in itself, without reference to activities--there would not be the slightest difference in their attainment of enlightenment. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra. [339]

If one person who had tried to control his mind-stream his whole life and another who had applied himself to the ten non-virtues were both to identify awareness simultaneously and practice that--since awareness does not rely upon other contributing conditions--one would not become enlightened even an instant before the other. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

If one person who had practiced generosity his whole life and another who had been a thief his entire life were both to identify the nature of awareness simultaneously--since there is nothing that can help or harm awareness- one would not become enlightened even an instant before the other. That is a solemn promise of myself,

Samantabhadra.

If one great sinner who had killed a hundred people and a hundred horses in a single lifetime and another who had devoted his whole life to circumambulations and prostrations were both simultaneously to identify ground-awareness, the great liberation from extremes, and to devote themselves to essential practice--since the primordial wisdom of awareness is devoid of modification or transformation--there would not be even the slightest

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difference in their attaining enlightenment together. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

If one person who had spent his life reciting the words of the Buddha and the commentaries and another who had broken his oaths; and lied his whole life were to identify awareness and practice that, the state of liberation would not be even the slightest bit further away for one than for the other. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra. [340]

If one person who had reached the Joyous bodhisattva ground by training and progressing along the grounds and paths and another who had not entered this spiritual vehicle in this life were both to identify for themselves the ground awareness that is free of extremes and were to practice and cultivate that together, one would not become enlightened even an instant before the other. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

If one person who had acquainted himself throughout his life to the path awareness and another who had never seen the entrance to Dharma were simultaneously to identify the ground-awareness, the great freedom from extremes, and were to relentlessly practice that, there would not be even the slightest difference in the time it would take them to attain enlightenment. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

If one person who had dedicated his whole life to constructing temples and stupas and to protecting the lives of others and another who had devoted his entire life to being a butcher, taking the lives of others, were both to identify the ground-awareness, the great

freedom from extremes, and persistently apply themselves to practicing that, there would not be even the slightest difference in their attainment of enlightenment. That is a solemn promise of myself, Samantabhadra.

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The point of all that is that all delusive activities, like actions in a dream, are never performed, but due to clinging to the true existence of the mere appearances of activities, that which does not exist is seen to exist. Since those actions neither help nor harm the ground-awareness, the great freedom from extremes, [341] they make no difference with respect to attaining enlightenment. There is no object that is benefited by good deeds, so, like space, they do not exist as something good. There is no object that is harmed by bad conduct, so they are of the nature of space--objectless, intangible, and all-pervasive. The reason for their appearing to exist in this way is that, due to ignorance of the ground, which is your own mode of existence, you wander endlessly in the cycle of existence solely as a result of extraspective clinging to other objects. Thus, once you have become aware of this situation, you may fathom the depths of your own being, gain mastery over yourself and that is spiritual Awakening. This is like an insane person regaining his senses. In that analogy, until you come to your senses and gain control of your mind, whatever you do, there is no way for it to be anything but insane conduct. Likewise, until awareness identifies itself and fathoms its own depths, there is no way that good or bad deeds can make you into a buddha. So know this!

O Vidyavajra, the advantages of that are inexpressible! [342] The advantages of identifying awareness and uninterruptedly meditating on that for six months are a hundred, a thousand, even ten thousand times greater than the advantages of physical prostrations and circumambulations for purify obscurations. The advantages of identifying the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and uninterruptedly meditating on that for six months are a hundred, a thousand, even ten thousand times greater than the advantages of devoting yourself to great acts of generosity for your whole life. The advantages of identifying the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the

ground, and uninterruptedly meditating on that for six months are far more than ten or a hundred thousand times greater than the advantages of filling this great galaxy with stupas and holy images made of the seven types of precious substances and making offerings and devotions to them. The merit of identifying the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practicing that for six months is ten or a hundred thousand times greater than the merit of spending your whole life reading the sutras and reciting mantras and so forth. If you identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that for six months, the advantages are a hundred, a thousand, or even ten thousand times greater than the advantages of practicing the profound stage of generation your whole life. If you identify within yourself the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly for six months, [343] the merit is far more than a hundred or a thousand times that of generating the Spirit of Awakening for all sentient beings and devoting yourself to their welfare your whole life. If you identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly, day and night, for six months, the merit is far more than ten or a hundred thousand times greater than that of constantly applying yourself to the ten virtuous deeds for your whole life.

O Vidyavajra, if you wish to release all the sentient beings of the three realms simultaneously from the ocean of suffering of mundane existence, identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly. If you wish to fathom all the inexhaustible ornamental wheels of the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of the jinas and jinaputras of the three times, identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly. If you wish to perfectly attain all the grounds, paths, and qualities of the nine successive yanas,

identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly. If you wish to manifestly attain the state of the dharmakaya [344] the original protector, in this very life

and with this very body, identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly. If you wish to revel in the great, even purity of samsara and nirvana, identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly. If you wish to completely perfect the qualities of the Ten Perfections, identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly. If you wish to simultaneously perfect all the primordial wisdoms of knowledge, compassion, and power, identify the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, and practice that uninterruptedly. Even if you do not meditate on the excellences of that which has been identified, you will undoubtedly become enlightened within seven lifetimes. Know that the advantages of identifying awareness for yourself are ten or a hundred million times superior to those of having a vision of three thousand buddhas and hearing their teachings all at once.

O Vidyavajra, the vast, one taste of the bhaga of the mystery of the mind of all the jinas and of Samantabhadri, the absolute nature of reality, free of all arising, cessation, and abiding, is none other than this pristine space. [345] All of samsara, nirvana, and the paths are of one taste in the nature of space, and space is the essential nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana. Space is the universal ground of the totality of samsara and nirvana. Upon recognizing and fathoming space as a display of the whole of samsara and nirvana, and upon realizing that they are not other than space, you will fathom this space; and the experience of space is called the yoga of space. Upon realizing everything as great emptiness, fathoming emptiness as space itself is the real essence of the meaning of

emptiness. That is the meaning of possessing the primordial wisdom of manifest awareness."

Then the entire gathering of disciples, including Bodhisattva Vidyavajra, expressed this prayer with one voice and with one intent:

O may reality-itself, free of conceptual elaboration, the spontaneous presence of the dharmakaya,

And the glory of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms
Be witness to the realization of this prayer!
By the force of enlightened knowledge, compassion, and power,
Let there be blessings that this prayer may be realized without interferences!

Hum. With the wisdom of realizing identitylessness,
May we authentically realize [346]
The primordially pure, all-pervasive dharmakaya,
The absolute nature of the great, even purity of samsara and nirvana,
Free of the conceptual elaborations of the eight extremes,
And emptiness endowed with the three doors of liberation.
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Due to the circumstance of grasping onto the self,
A label is imputed upon a non-existent basis of designation.
With discerning wisdom
May we realize that as great identitylessness.

In the great, pervasive ground of the absolute nature

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The animate and inanimate universe arises due to delusive ego grasping.
With discerning wisdom
May we realize that as great emptiness.

With discerning wisdom
May we realize the phenomena of causes and effects
And all appearances of benefit and harm by gods and demons
As great nonobjectivity.

With discerning wisdom
May we realize the buddhas and sentient beings
And all objectification and reification of hopes and fears
As great identitylessness.

With discerning wisdom
May we realize the apparitions of the eight collections of consciousness
And all appearances of sensory objects

As great identitylessness.

As the subjective and objective phenomena of the world
Are like the ten illusory analogies, [347]
With the wisdom of realizing identitylessness
May we comprehend them as great nonobjectivity.

With the wisdom of seeing the full range of phenomena,

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May we know, just as it is,
The great expanse that totally encompasses
The dharmas, paths, and fruitions of the yanas.

May we realize the authentic view
Of awakening into enlightenment
In the displays of the pure equality of samara and nirvana
In the primordially pure, original ground.

Thus, samsara, nirvana, and the path
Are like displays of reflections in the ocean.
May the great non-duality, the spirit of awakening, manifest,
And may we reach the supreme path.

With no meditation, free of any attentional object,
With the non-duality of a subject and object of observation,
Free of clinging to negation and affirmation,
May we release action and reach the supreme path.

Once the obscuring veils of ignorance
Have been removed from the face of the dharmakaya, the original, primordial ground,
May we reach the foremost of paths
With the great, primordial wisdom of awareness.

May we swiftly reach the foremost of paths
In which we fathom the depths of experiencing

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Mastery in the great non-meditation of reality-itself, [348]

Free of the effort of progressing in the training.

Once the body, speech, and mind have entered the vajra womb,61
And the embodiments and the eye of great primordial wisdom
Have been freed of muddled, habitual contaminations,
May there be a direct vision of reality-itself.

Due to the virtues of direct vision,
May we experience the benefits
Of the superb Very Joyful Ground
And the grounds and paths of a mature vidyadhara.

With the growth of meditative experiences and realizations,
As a result of all impure appearances being transmuted
Into the limpidity of the pure absolute nature,
May experiential visions progress.

By the power of the progression of experiential visions,
May we transcend the [fifth] ground known as Difficult to Purify,
And may we attain all the qualities of the grounds and paths
Of a vidyadhara who has mastery over life.

Once awareness has ripened to its vital essence,
May awareness come to its consummate state,
In which the phenomenal world is purified

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61 This refers to one's body, speech, and mind transforming into the body-vajra, speech-vajra, and mind-vajra of a buddha.

As great displays of the embodiments and buddha-fields.

Due to the virtues of consummate awareness,
May we transcend the [eighth] ground known as the Immovable,
And may we attain all the qualities of the grounds and paths
Of a Mahamudra vidyadhara.

Once all the appearances of phenomena have been extinguished
In great, intellect-transcending reality-itself, [349]

May we attain confidence and hold our ground,
And may we proceed to the Path of No More Training.

By the power of the intellect-transcending extinction of phenomena,
May we transcend the great [tenth] ground known as the Cloud of Dharma,
And may we swiftly attain the qualities of the grounds and paths
Of a spontaneously present vidyadhara.

Thus, may we come to the culmination in this very life
Of the essential Dharma of this swift path,
And before long, may we swiftly attain
The state of a buddha.

May the primordial wisdom of knowledge and seeing
Come ablaze in great, pervasive reality-itself,
And may the three realms of samsara be totally

Transformed into the nature of the three embodiments.

May all impure, delusive phenomena
Be released right now
Into the space of great, primordial purity,
Like the dissolution of illusory phantoms.

May the mental states and appearances of all sentient beings
Be dissolved into the great, inner, original, absolute nature,
Like dreams vanishing into the absolute nature,
And may we become enlightened as Kumarakalasakaya."62

Then the Revealer of the Original Ground said, "O Vidyavajra, as for the prayers made by ordinary beings, first they should invoke all the jinas as their witnesses, and finally in order to have their prayers realized, [350] they should repeat their words of truth. Moreover, if potent mantras are recited less than seven times, it is very difficult for them to be effective. On the other hand, if prayers are made and words of truth are uttered before a physical representation of the objects of refuge, in the presence of your spiritual mentor,

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62 According to the dictionary Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo (p. 2432), this term (Tib. gzhon nu bum sku), literally meaning "youthful vase body," is unique to the Great Perfection tradition. It refers to the awareness of Samantabhadra, which is of the oceanic nature of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms having six qualities: (1) externally luminous consciousness is withdrawn into itself, and the great, internally luminous, original, ground-absolute nature appears to itself, (2) it transcends the ground, (3) it differentiates, (4) it is liberated upwards, (5) it arises from nothing else, and (6) it dwells in its own place.

According to Gyatrul Rinpoche, this state of awakening is likened to a vase, for, as the sole bindu, it encompasses the whole of samsara and nirvana, while transcending the three times. It is called "youthful," for it is not subject to aging or degeneration, and it is called a "body," for it is the aggregate of all the inexhaustible bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of all the buddhas.

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in the midst of an assembly of many Sangha members, on the thirtieth day of the lunar month, or at the time of a solar or lunar eclipse, they will be realized."

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Then Bodhisattva Vidyavajra asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, when practicing this unsurpassed, supreme yana, the profound and secret Great Perfection, are there, or are there not, pitfalls and obstacles that lead to mistakes? If there are such, may the Teacher explain what they are!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, when first establishing the profound view, there is the danger of mistaking understanding for realization. How so? Understanding is just taking in the oral explanation of your teacher. This is like memorizing the words of a textbook without examining their meaning. By merely reciting what you have heard, without fathoming its meaning, you may have the conceit of thinking, 'I know it,' [351] but it has really not reached your mind-

stream. That is just understanding, but it is not realization. One who arrogantly takes this for realization is like someone who has never seen a king's treasury and has no claim on it, but who has heard others' reports about the treasury and memorized them, and then thinks, 'That is my treasury.' This is utterly pointless.

As for realization, whether it concerns explanations by your teacher, seeing the real meaning of the tantras, oral transmissions, or practical instructions, or something that emerges from the expanse of your own wisdom, first you may understand just a fraction. Then with that as a catalyst, you repeatedly investigate, and come to a subtle, exact knowledge of how all appearing phenomena are nonobjective and empty from their own side. Finally, you decisively fathom the one taste of great emptiness, the fact that all of samsara and nirvana naturally arises from the expanse of the ground and is not established as anything else. That is realization. If you lacked firm, vast, and profound wisdom that does not entertain the slightest doubt about this, and the entire world, together with its gods, were to teach you repeatedly that samsara and nirvana are substantial, permanent, stable, and immutable, you would turn

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back from the path of liberation. [352] The nature of realization is that of meditation, for there is no meditation superior to realization. First you understand, then you gain experience, and finally you reach the depths of realization. Without that, there is nothing deserving the labels of the view or meditation, for there is not even a trace of them. So be aware of the indispensability of firm realization arising in one's mind-stream.

Not knowing how to distinguish between realization and gaining confidence, many people mistake one for the other and thereby deceive themselves. So learn how to make that distinction. Realization refers to correctly knowing with certainty the manner in which the nature of the grounds and paths and the triad of samsara, nirvana, and the path are all completely present in awareness itself. There are many people who say that the knowledge of those who go through great hardships, experiencing a myriad of joys and sorrows, is genuine realization, but the knowledge of those who gain immediate insight into the nature of reality does not count as

realization. That is incorrect. Consider this analogy: some very devout people wishing to make a pilgrimage to the three types of holy representations in Lhasa, Samye, and so on, courageously make a long and arduous journey to those places of pilgrimage and encounter those holy representations. [353] Some other people who were born in those pilgrimage sites also encounter those holy representations, without hardship or any display of courage. There is no difference in the encounters of those two groups of people. What they are encountering is the three types of representations, and there is no difference in those encounters. Moreover, the unimpeded knowledge of all the outer, inner, and secret representations on the part of those who were born in those holy places is the same. Likewise; there is not the slightest difference between (1) one who identifies reality-itself, the mode of existence of suchness, after experiencing many hardships, joys, and sorrows,

and (2) one who establishes, by means of discerning primordial wisdom, the identitylessness of all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana, and then directly realizes and knows the mode of existence of reality-itself. What each one needs to do is to ascertain reality-itself, the mode of existence of suchness, and identify the awareness that is present as the ground. There is no difference there whatsoever.

Realizing, ascertaining, and fathoming the meaning is called the view. As for gaining confidence, first you identify [awareness], then you bring forth inactive, wonderfully spacious awareness, and by practicing that unterruptedly, [354] finally you achieve stability within yourself. Then without any deviation in terms of times or situations--like the absence of darkness once dawn has broken--it is said that you have gained confidence for yourself. As soon as you first gain realization, if you do not gain confidence by applying yourself to practice, even though you have identified your own essential nature, you will die as an ordinary person, and you will have to wander in the cycle of existence. As analogies to this, even if you possess a mountain of food but do not eat it, it will be of no use and you will die of starvation; and even if you own a castle filled with clothing, if you do not wear it, you will die from exposure to the elements. Therefore, recognize the vital importance of gaining

confidence.

If you do not know how to distinguish between the mind and awareness, you will confuse the mind for awareness, which will unfortunately lead to obstacles to the state of liberation. So know how to distinguish them! As for the mind, there is the deluded mind that clings to appearances, the mind that seeks the path by way of negation and affirmation, and the mind that makes consciousness its path.

The deluded mind that clings to appearances is the ordinary mind of sentient beings who do not seek the path and who do not see the entrances to

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the real paths. The mind that seeks the path is said to take the mind as its path, for in this case, [355] the mind observes the mind, ideation is observed by ideation, and one seeks the path of merely arousing pleasure and pain through intellectual modifications and the acceptance and rejection [of virtue and vice]. As for the mind that makes consciousness its path, the experience of unceasing, ordinary consciousness, which is the ground of the mind, does not entail realizing the view. Consequently, outer appearances are reduced to something ethically neutral, and those appearances are taken to be real, so reification is not counteracted; inwardly, your own body appears to be ethically neutral, so the reification of grasping onto the body is not counteracted; and since both outer and inner appearances are taken to be ethically neutral and substantially existent, you do not transcend the mind, so that, too, is called the mind. Even if that were called awareness--like giving a boy's name to an unborn fetus--the characteristic of ascertaining awareness in itself would not have been realized. Not realizing samsara and nirvana as great emptiness is non-awareness, and on the basis of the functions of awareness and non-awareness, those terms are conventionally accepted.

Awareness first establishes everything included in the phenomenal world of samsara and nirvana as emptiness. [356] Just as the reflections of the planets and stars in the ocean have no existence apart from the ocean, and yet they are of the same nature as displays of the ocean; and just as rainbows in the sky have no existence apart

from the sky, and yet those appearances are of the same nature as displays of the sky; in the same manner, finally, one truly knows that things appear even though nothing exists from the side of appearances, that all appearances of the animate and inanimate world have no existence apart from the ground-sugatagarbha, and yet those appearances are of the same nature as

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displays of the ground-sugatagarbha. And with that knowledge, awareness manifests.

As if the dawn were breaking in the sky, without need of meditation, one comprehends samsara and nirvana as being totally subsumed within great Awakening. Without need of examination, there is the self-awareness, without grasping, that the whole of samsara and nirvana is like reflections of the planets and stars in the ocean. Without need of modification, there is natural liberation in the ground absolute nature, the great, pure equality of samsara and nirvana. Without need of objectification, there is a spacious dissolution into the great expanse, with no object, without obstruction, and without intentionality .You experience and gain mastery over the inexhaustible ornamental wheels of the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of the jinas and jinaputras of the three times. Ultimately, simply due to identifying the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, {357] you gain mastery over the life force of samsara and nirvana. This is not like articulating circumstances involving such things as water and multicolored paper that are used to give rise to a mind that receives initiation. Rather, you know you have obtained the empowerments of the jinas and jinaputras and the oral transmissions of all the writings that emerge from the primordial wisdom of awareness. Thus, you have already, simultaneously obtained all empowerments and oral transmissions. Therefore, recognize the importance of not mistaking the mind for awareness.

If you do not know how to distinguish between cognition and wisdom, you will confuse cognition for wisdom, as a result of which you run the danger of wasting your entire life. So know how to distinguish them! Cognition is the mind of every sentient being, which serves as the basis for the emergence of all ideation. It is the

limpid, clear nature of the unceasing flow of objects, and it is

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just that which transforms into the objects of all appearances. You may identify unceasing cognition, this whirring consciousness, as being of the essential nature of meditation. However, since this ethically neutral consciousness of cognition is the basis of samsara, even if you achieve stability in that, this will lead you to the two higher realms of existence and not higher. So cognition does not transform into wisdom.

Since cognition [358] does not turn into wisdom, all positive and negative karmas are directed solely to samsara, and they never become causes for liberation. Thus, recognize the importance of not becoming absorbed in that. This is a disaster for all those meditators who remain solely in this state, without ever transcending it. From this arise the errors stemming from the nature of all meditative experiences of vividness, from the nature of all ethically neutral states, and from various, miscellaneous extrasensory perceptions of seeing appearances as gods and demons. All those who take this alone as being the path will be endlessly deluded in samsara, and they are not even moving in the direction of liberation and omniscience.

Wisdom is a subsequent knowledge that establishes everything included in the phenomenal world of samsara and nirvana as being empty, identityless, and nonobjective. That is called the wisdom that realizes identitylessness with respect to that which is always unreal and empty. Due to that powerful method, all appearances and mental states are gradually extinguished in the absolute nature, just as the whole earth is saturated by the moisture of the ocean.

The emergence in one's mind-stream of the great wisdom that realizes identitylessness, like salt being saturated by water, [359] calms all appearing phenomena in the ocean of the original ground. The emergence in one's mind stream of the wisdom that realizes identitylessness, like ice being saturated with warmth, calms all subjective and objective phenomena in the original, primordial

ground, the absolute nature. The emergence in one's mind-stream of the wisdom that realizes identitylessness, like camphor saturated by the wind, extinguishes samsara in the great wind of reversion.63 In the mind of a person in whom the wisdom that realizes identitylessness has arisen all appearances do seem to exist, but in the depths of that person's mind they are known to be like illusions and dreams, so they are dismissed as being identityless. For a person in whom the wisdom that realizes identitylessness has arisen, whatever may be craved or grasped, deep down, one has reached the depths of identitylessness. In the mind of a person in whom the wisdom that realizes identitylessness has arisen, all the basic roots of samsara will disintegrate. Thus, the wisdom that realizes identitylessness ascertains samsara and nirvana as great emptiness. The great wisdom that experiences reality knows how all the qualities of the path and the fruition are perfected. [360] Great, omnipresent, all-seeing wisdom experiences the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground. The wisdom that knows reality as it is knows reality-itself, the mode of existence of suchness. The wisdom that sees the full range of phenomena perceives the basic roots of all the phenomena of samsara, and it sees and experiences all the inexhaustible ornamental wheels of the bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of the jinas and jinaputras of the three times. In reality, when one fathoms the vastness and depth of the great wisdom that realizes identitylessness, this is nothing other than a natural expression of the essential nature [of awareness].

O Vidyavajra, if you do not know how to distinguish between consciousness and primordial wisdom, you may identify consciousness as primordial wisdom, and consequently wander in circles of delusion. So learn

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63 The analogy here is of a wind that reverses the natural sequence of the cycle of existence as characterized by the twelve links of dependent origination.

how to distinguish between them! Consciousness is the naturally present limpidity and clarity of the unceasing objects that emerge in the expanse of cognition, which, when they enter the sense-doors, are bound by self-grasping. By looking outwards from the sense-doors, that which appears as seeing, hearing, feeling, experiencing, and contacting external sensory appearances is called consciousness. [361] Insofar as that individually apprehends and knows labels and things, and causes the closely held three feelings of pleasure, pain, and indifference, all things appear to be separate and distinct, they are given individual labels, and things are apprehended as being distinct. That acts as the basis from which emerge thoughts of attachment to one's own side and aversion to the other's side. The good is apprehended as being good, and it is made into an object of hope, thus proliferating thoughts of yearning. The bad is apprehended as being bad, and that serves as a basis from which various thoughts of anxiety arise.

That which is called cognition manifests as consciousness of appearances, it turns into appearing objects, and it causes appearances to be made manifest. From the very moment that a thought and a subject arise, that which is called mind merges nondually with appearances and vanishes. Primordial wisdom is the potency of ground, and it is expressed as the five primordial wisdoms. Specifically, in the manifest state of the ground, great primordial wisdom, which has been forever present, abides as the aspect of limpidity and clarity , like the dawn breaking and the sun rising. It is not a blankness that knows nothing, like an unceasing darkness. [362] All appearances are naturally present and do not arise or cease. Just as heat is naturally present in the nature of fire, moisture is present in the nature of water, and coolness is present in the nature of the wind, due to the unceasing power in the nature of primordial wisdom, there is total knowledge and total awareness of all phenomena, without its ever merging with

or entering into objects. Primordial wisdom is self-arisen, naturally clear, free of outer and inner obscuration, and it is the all-pervasive, limpid, clear infinity of space, free of contamination.

What are the causes and conditions by which consciousness is

transformed into primordial wisdom? Accurately knowing how thoughts of the phenomena of samsara and nirvana emerge, including the eight collections of consciousness and sensory appearances, and realizing the manner in which they are naturally perfect as displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms in the nature of reality-itself. Then from the time that one identifies the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, consciousness is transformed into a display of primordial wisdom. Thus, as for consciousness, solely due to the apparitions of self-concepts, primordial wisdom takes on the guise of consciousness, like a pile of stones being mistaken for a man. As for transforming that into primordial wisdom, [363] like recognizing a pile of stones for what it is instead of seeing it as a man, the correct realization of the mode of being of consciousness transforms it into primordial wisdom. It is not that consciousness must vanish into the absolute nature and primordial wisdom must arise from somewhere else. But know that it seems that way due to the functions of self-grasping and identitylessness.

Due to consciousness, the first [moment of] knowledge emerges in the aspect of the object, just as various images of planets and stars emerge in the ocean. That which arises is closely held by conceptual consciousness, it is bound by reification, and one becomes deluded. Realizing the reasons for that brings one to primordial wisdom.

O Vidyavajra, if you do not know how to distinguish between the total ground and the dharmakaya, you may take the total ground and the total-ground

consciousness as the path, in which case you will not transcend the three realms. Why? The actual total ground is something immaterial, thinking nothing, a space-like vacuity and blankness in which appearances are impeded. Know that you come to that state in deep, dreamless sleep, when you faint, and when you are dying. [364] As a result of engaging in conceptual negation and affirmation, the total ground is aroused, and if someone takes that as sublime meditation and stabilizes it, know that he may become demented, stupid, and totally ignorant. There are some teachers who identify that as the great, intellect-transcending extinction into reality-itself. If you get

stuck there, it is certain that you will be cast into existence in the realm of gods who are devoid of discernment.64

Someone with an experience of emptiness and luminosity who directs his attention inwards may bring a stop to all external appearances and come to a state in which he believes there are no appearances and no thoughts. This experience of brilliance from which one dares not part is the total ground consciousness. This is aroused by the power of being bound by the fetters of meditation, but some teachers identify it as the clear light. Others think it is awareness of non-meditation, and yet others identify it as the insertion of the vital energies and mind into the central channel. In reality, it is the total ground consciousness, so if you get stuck there, you will be cast into the formless realm, without coming even a bit closer to the state of liberation. The total ground and the total ground consciousness observe one's own mind, [365] but they do not recognize or know samsara and nirvana as one's own appearances.

The dharmakaya is spontaneously present in the essential nature of the pure equality of samsara and nirvana; it is emptiness, the infinity of space; its displays are groundless and rootless; it is the great unobstructed nonobjectivity. The primordial wisdoms and excellent qualities of the buddhas do not enhance it; the

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64 This is included in the formless realm.

terrible evils, obscurations, and miseries of sentient beings do not impair it. Not becoming good or bad, it is the great, immutable, originally pure, all-pervasive, ground absolute nature. Once its mode of existence is established, identifying its manifest state within oneself is simply holding one's own ground. It is very deluded to think that the dharmakaya did not exist previously and that it is newly coming into existence.

The realm in which the absolute nature of the dharmakaya manifests is nondual with space. All the phenomena included in samsara and nirvana are naturally present in the emptiness of reality-itself, the absolute nature that is free of the extremes of conceptual elaboration.

It is called the embodiment of the totality of all primordial wisdoms and qualities as perfect, spontaneously present displays. Thoroughly fathoming the mode of being of this dharmakaya, Samantabhadra, is realization. By experiencing that state, one knows that just as all the reflections of the stars and planets in the ocean are displays of the ocean itself, [366] and just as the entire animate and inanimate universe is a display of one space, all of samsara and nirvana is a display of the one dharmakaya. That is the great plenitude of the dharmakaya.

Just as the reflections of the planets and stars in the ocean are bound by the ocean, and just as the entire animate and inanimate universe is bound by space, so are samsara, nirvana, and the path all bound by the one dharmakaya. Experiencing that reality, dwelling in it, entering the womb of the nature of existence, coming to the nature of being within yourself, and ascertaining this to be free of good and bad and all benefit and harm is the experience of realization by which one gains confidence, and that is spiritual awakening.

O Vidyavajra, if you do not know how to distinguish between that which is and is not the path, there is the danger that you may succumb to that which is

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not the path, and unfortunately not experience the genuine path; so learn how to distinguish between them! Correctly realizing the view, the essential point of emptiness, and simply taking that knowledge as the path is the path of the perfection of wisdom. Once you have realized the meaning of great emptiness, you will know the nature of the entirety of samsara, nirvana, and the path, and you will experience the absolute nature. That is called awareness of the Great Perfection. [367] The limpid, clear ground, free of contamination is taken as the path. If you take consciousness as the path, you are taking the aspects [of consciousness] as the path. If you take the ground displays of the pure equality of samsara and nirvana as the path, that is taking the essential nature as the path, and that is called the authentic path.

That which is not the path is called viewing ideation with ideation. With respect to ideation, you may engage in such evaluations as

denying and affirming, adopting the good and rejecting the bad, and finally regard merely unstructured consciousness as the ultimate view and meditation. But that is not the path. Even if you take the creative expressions of consciousness and the essential nature of consciousness as the path, since the mind is the basis of delusion, you will certainly not ascend beyond the three realms. So that is not the path.

O Vidyavajra, if you do not know how to distinguish between mastering the ground and succumbing to the ethically neutral, you will mistakenly fall under the influence of the ethically neutral, and you will remain as deluded as you were before. Why? In the absence of a label, there is no basis for the appearance of the label. In the absence of a phenomenon, there is no basis for the appearance of the phenomenon. In the absence of benefit or harm, there no basis for the appearance of benefit and harm. In the absence of samsara and

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nirvana, there is no basis for the appearance of samsara and nirvana. In the absence of sensory objects, there is no [368] basis for the appearance of sensory objects. You may establish that all such bases are non-existent and know them to be non-existent. But if you regard the objects of those bases of appearances to be obliterated, you have succumbed to a nihilistic view; and if not even the bases of appearances and their objects were to exist, there would be no referents of appearances. Realizing the clear, empty nature, free of conceptual elaboration, of the bases of appearances and their objects is mastering the ground. That ground is present in the mind-streams of all sentient beings, but it is tightly constricted by dualistic grasping; it is regarded as external firm and solid things. This is like water in its natural, fluid state freezing in a cold wind. It is due to dualistic grasping onto subjects and objects that the ground, which is naturally free, becomes frozen into appearances of things. Thus, meditators--however puffed up they may be--who do not even know how dualistic grasping operates reduce the ground to something ethically neutral. So, however much they may meditate, they will not become spiritually awakened.

O Vidyavajra, if you do not know how to distinguish between delusion and liberation, you will go astray by mistaking delusion for

liberation, such that you will not attain the great state of liberation. It is like this. There are three types of delusion: the delusion in one's mind-stream, delusions regarding the path, and the delusion of going astray. [369]

The delusion in one's mind-stream refers to the minds of all sentient beings being deluded by the ignorance of dualistic grasping, which prevents them from seeing the entrance to the path.

There are many kinds of delusion regarding the path. Specifically, one may spend one's whole life observing and modifying ideation, which causes one

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to hold closely to various joys and sorrows. Some who do that become so deluded that they become delirious, like an irrigation canal that becomes blocked and overflows with swirling water. Some are deluded by taking a soothing sense of well-being as the best of meditations. Others fixate on a sense of luminosity and deludedly take that to be the most sublime of meditations. Some people cling to various obsessions with divine and demonic apparitions stemming from their experience of luminosity. They proceed to teach this to others, holding themselves to be supreme, and they waste their lives in the pursuit of material gain, driven by arrogance and conceit. Even if they meditate, it is for that purpose; and even if others try to correct them, they do not believe them, and they cannot turn away from the path they are treading. Others take nonconceptuality and a blank sense of emptiness to be the foremost of meditations; and, becoming absorbed in that, they spin around in a cycle of delusion. Yet others, due to their ignorance of the view, [370] devote their entire lives to the mere empty luminosity of consciousness, and they are said to be deluded with respect to the path.

As for the delusion of going astray, before some people come to the culmination of the path, they take meditative experiences and views and meditations with objective referents as the pinnacle of meditation, and they get stuck there. They then face death as ordinary people, and they suffer the delusion of having gone astray.

That is also called becoming deluded in error. Why? First one

establishes the emptiness of all phenomena included in the universe of samsara and nirvana, and after recognizing that, one thinks, "I have realized samsara and nirvana as great emptiness, so now I don't need to engage in the conventional Dharma of accumulating merit, nor do I need to meditate," and one proclaims these empty words to others. There are many such people who then waste their entire lives

due to distractions and spiritual sloth, and they face death as ordinary people. Others, after they have similarly recognized the nature of emptiness, think, "Now there is nothing whatsoever for me to practice," and they proclaim the superiority of their view. After misleading others with rituals and liturgies, when they die, they are caught by the ripening of their karma, and they step into the abyss of the miserable states of existence. That is a mistake. Some become satisfied just by hearing about and understanding emptiness, [371] and they discard all practices of meditation as if they were clots of spittle. Maintaining that there is no need to guard their samayas or precepts, even if they were to have a direct vision of the Buddha, they would be snared by false views and misconceptions, without even a trace of faith or reverence. As for their involvement in negative actions, they would experience no qualms even about the urge to kill a human being; if they felt the need to eat their father's flesh, they would do so as if it were ambrosia; they take delight in material wealth acquired by cheating others; they partake of nonvirtue as if it were medicine, and they reject virtue as if it were poison. Due to such negative actions, as they train in emptiness, they are like people who run into a plant poisonous to the touch while seeking life-sustaining medicine. If it becomes a cause for such negative actions, emptiness is reduced to a demonic meditation, and in this life one is deluded as a mara and a malevolent rudra.

Generally speaking, once you have realized emptiness, if all accumulations of meritorious, virtuous karma are nonexistent and unnecessary, all nonvirtuous karma, material acquisitions, attachments, hatreds, and cravings should likewise be abandoned. However, if you reject all deeds of virtue and vice, and passively dwell in the state of emptiness, you bold guys may possibly be doing just fine; [372] but if you reject virtue and pursue nonvirtue, don't

you see that your mind-streams become demonic and diabolical?

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If you recognize that with respect to emptiness virtue and vice do not exist, lie down and rest on a bed with no virtue or vice! If you are right in your knowledge that virtue does not exist and in your refusal to engage in virtue, there is no point in engaging in vice either. So release yourself in nonactivity and remain there! If you know that vice does not exist, what is the point of doing it? Thinking that vice does not exist, if the pursuit of vicious behavior is emptiness, then since all sentient beings have just such an attitude and conduct, they should all have realized emptiness. Do you get it? Do you understand that people who engage in vice and nonvirtue and the nonvirtuous deeds themselves are in the pit of nonexistence? If you truly realize the view of emptiness, you will see all acts of virtue and vice as being like children's games, so what is the point of pursuing them? In that way, once you have seen all appearances to be like illusions and dreams, if you completely release yourself into inactivity, just that is the conduct of emptiness. However, upon ascertaining the nonexistence of virtue, someone may develop false views regarding the Dharma, and, with the understanding that vices do not exist, continuously engage in nonvirtuous behavior. In the end, the lords of hell will rise from the pit of nonexistence [373] and terribly punish that person for a long time. When he is endlessly tormented in the great dungeon of misery, what will he do then?

If you say there are benefits to virtue in this lifetime, but add that it does not truly exist or you dismiss it with indifference; or if you say there are disadvantages to sin, but you really do not take it seriously and hold to wrong views, when you finally die, you will remember its drawbacks and you will tremble with fear. All possessions and friends you have accumulated will be left behind, you will be terrified of the agents of the Lord of Death, and out of unbearable fear at the miseries of hell, your eyes will fill with tears. How tragic it will be when you claw at your chest and cannot avoid going to hell! At that time

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it is too late to feel regret and too late to recall the drawbacks [of

evil], so what is of benefit now? Do you understand that you are going into battle after sacrificing the depths of emptiness?

Without succumbing to such delusion and false paths, know that realizing emptiness and practicing until you reach the grounds and paths of liberation is of the utmost importance. Having simply identified awareness, some people lack even a trace of any meditation and claim they have [374] experienced the extinction into reality-itself and there is nothing more to spiritual awakening than this. That is an enormous mistake! The qualities of realization mature through the power of gradual practice. This is how you must reach the state of liberation: (1) the inexpressible state during all meditation sessions that occurs due to the power of first identifying awareness and practicing single-pointedly is called the awareness of identification; (2) next, by the power of earnest meditative practice, from the time you get up in the morning until you fall asleep at night, you never waver even for an instant from that state of awareness, and that is called the awareness of the expanse; (3) finally, by the power of ardent meditation, awareness uninterruptedly gains confidence within itself, and that is called the contemplation of the river's current or the awareness of gaining confidence.

Again, by the power of incessant meditation, thoughts of self-grasping turn into empty awareness, and the ground of samara is empty. The clinging of dualistic grasping is immediately released, and the appearances of yourself and others vanish into the absolute nature. All hatred for your enemies, attachment to your friends, hope for the good, fear of the bad, [375] obsession with wealth, and craving for the five sensory objects vanish into the absolute nature. You dwell, like space, without activity in the infinite expanse of reality-itself, and that is certain liberation.

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If someone says, "I have been extinguished into reality-itself," since such words and thoughts are of the intellect and cognition, this reveals that no such extinction has occurred. If the appearances of illness arise for such a person, this indicates that illness and the locus of illness have not been extinguished. If there are appearances of hunger and thirst and of being warm and cold, those are indications

of self-grasping. If someone says, "Even though I have no attachment, hatred, or obsessive craving, I act as if I did," such duplicity of pretending one has something one really doesn't indicates that no extinction has occurred. There is no reason why one would engage in such pretense, so that indicates that one has not been released into great, intellect-transcending reality-itself. Those who seek out and grasp at material possessions demonstrate that they are not liberated. Even if they maintain that they are liberated, the fallacy of their assertion is revealed by examining the signs. Those who say they are liberated whether or not they meditate and who have not progressed in the slightest [376] beyond all ordinary types of activity reveal the falsity of their own words, and they become objects of great derision for the wise who are imbued with virtues.

Meditative visions vanish like mist, without imparting the slightest benefit or harm. Realization is like space, for it has immutably come to the nature of reality. Whether or not one is liberated is revealed by examining the signs of both. The criteria of liberation are to be apprehended by way of one's dreams: (1) superior people purify their dreams in the clear light and become thoroughly integrated with it; (2) middling people recognize their dreams as dreams and are able to engage in various types of emanations and transformations; (3) inferior people find that they have no more dreams due to negative habitual propensities, but only good dreams. When sleep arises as the clear light, one gains confidence in terms of the enlightened awareness of the dharmakaya. When

one gains mastery over the displays of emanation and transformation in one's dreams, one can transform one's own appearances into displays of the sambhogakaya. When one has only good dreams, without a single bad one, one is definitely released as a nirmanakaya. Those are taught as methods for investigating one's own degree of spiritual maturation.

The state of extinction into reality-itself is one [377] in which all appearances of things have dissolved into great, intellect-transcending reality-itself. Thus, one does not mentally engage even for an instant in the affairs of samsara but remains inactive. This is definite liberation. Strive diligently in the practice of profound

meditation until you meet the criteria of liberation! Even if you have heard many teachings and know many treatises of the sutras and tantras, if your mind-stream is not liberated by great meditative experience, there is not the slightest benefit, and you will have to continue wandering in the cycle of existence. Thus, liberating your own mind-stream is the vast treasury of all learning, the great treasure of wisdom and great primordial wisdom, and the sublimity of all meditation. So recognize the indispensability of striving in essential practice. Hold fast to it! Rely upon it! Realize it! If your derive no benefit for your own mind-stream, and focus on the many implications of the words you have heard, your life will be led in vain. Moreover, you will have a hard time finding anyone to teach, for you will just generate powerful pride and conceit in others, making it very difficult for them to get any benefit. Even if you acquire enormous prestige and notoriety, this human life is like an episode in a dream and like visiting a marketplace. [378] Thus, do not be beguiled, for the time of death is coming and there is no time for pursuing prestige and fame. When their lives are at an end, some people do not notice the occurrence of portents of death, such as advanced age, the loss of physical strength, and the decline of their mental powers; and still they praise themselves thinking, "I am

great, I am good." Still attached to the yearning for greatness and prestige, their craving does not cease. When you analyze this, feel compassion for such people who do not see the futility of wasting their lives in the pursuit of status and honor.

Do not rely upon anyone, but entrust yourself to the Three Jewels. Do not cling to other affairs, but apply yourself to the sublime Dharma. Do not cherish other hopes, but place all your hopes in the state of liberation. Do not waste the rest of your life, but enfold it in essential practice. You do not really achieve fame by working for it, so yearn for the kingdom of the dharmakaya. Without deceiving yourself, apply yourself to a genuine spiritual practice for dying. This is the only time you will attain a human life, so make sure that it is meaningful. Now is the only time you will encounter such profound practical guidance, so do not throw it away but practice it! Without deceiving yourself, [379] never forget death. When you go to the next world, you will do so without friends or relatives, so

dispense with conduct for protecting your family! When you run into death, since you must leave your body and utensils behind, and since there is no way for your friends and relatives to accompany you, utterly sever craving and attachment for anything. For those who uphold the lineage, those are highly cherished, quintessential, practical instructions pointing out the supreme path for attaining liberation in this lifetime. So put them into practice! Fuse them inseparably with your mind! If you lack those vital points, you will not attain liberation in this life, so hold them as the very essence of practical advice.

O Vidyavajra, if you do not know how to distinguish between buddha and sentient beings, you may mistake a sentient being for a buddha, and such deluded, ignorant fools run the risk of wasting their human lives. Why? A

buddha is so called due to having cleansed the stains of ignorance in the absolute nature and to having fully extended all primordial wisdoms and excellent qualities. Infinitely pervasive like space, [380] such a being is free of the eight extremes of conceptual elaboration, is endowed with the three doors of liberation, and is enlightened in the great bliss of equality . The dharmakaya, being free of signs and labels, is open and unobstructed. Free of mutation within the three times, it has no fundamental ground.

Apart from that, do not think buddhas have bodies: If you thought so, buddhas would have to have parents, and would you then not regard them as sentient beings who have fallen to the extreme of birth? Do not think that buddhas have a self! If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings bound by the ignorance of being single individuals? Do not think buddhas have realms with their inhabitants, called buddha-fields. If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings bound by dualistic grasping? Do not think buddhas have eyes! If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings having visual consciousness? Do not think buddhas have ears! If you thought so, they would seem to have auditory consciousness together with sound, [381] and would you not regard them as sentient beings having the same? Do not think buddhas have noses! If you thought so, would you not

regard them as sentient beings involved in olfactory dualistic grasping? Do not think buddhas have tongues! If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings involved in gustatory dualistic grasping? Do not think buddhas have bodies! If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings involved in tactile dualistic grasping?

Do not think buddhas arose in the past! If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings who have fallen to the extreme of death? Do not think buddhas will arise in the future! If you thought so, would you not regard

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them as deluded sentient beings who are subject to birth? Do not think buddhas exist in the present! If you thought they existed somewhere, would you not regard them as permanent, immutable sentient beings? Do not think of buddhas as teachers having disciples! If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings who reify self and others? [382] Do not think buddhas are favorably or unfavorably influenced by receiving homage, offerings, and service. If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings with prejudicial clinging with regards to the good and the bad? Do not think of buddhas as having individual locations in the east, south, west, north, or intermediate directions! If you thought so, would you not regard them as sentient beings with specifiable distinctions?

In short, if any buddhas were like sentient beings, they would come when beckoned; if they were served as masters, they would be directly seen just as masters are, and one would have to hope that they would respond as such. But however we might call upon them and revere them, the fact that not even an atom comes into existence teaches us and makes us understand something. If buddhas were established in any of the three times, they would have to be produced by the intention to actualize themselves, and they would be established by the power of meditation. In that case, since they would have to first be non-existent, then freshly established, that would indicate that there would be a path of intention and an object of meditation. That demonstrates they are not established in any of

the three times.

One called a sentient being is one who grasps and is bound by grasping onto a personal identity. [383] Grasped objects foster grasping onto the identities of phenomena. Then obsessive clinging and holding onto them proliferates a constant stream of ideation, and one is dazed by roaming in cycles of delusion.

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Finally, by the power of practicing single-pointedly and with great fortitude in that way, the contaminated psycho-physical aggregates vanish right down to the level of atoms. Then the complete signs of having manifestly, perfectly awakened include the occurrence of a roaring sound, earthquakes, being enveloped in light, and the simultaneous entrance of the sun and moon into the mouth of Rahula.65 Now the profound, swift path to awakening as a great transference rainbow body in one life and with one body simultaneously completes all the collections of merit and knowledge without having to accumulate great collections of merit for many countless eons. If you do not know the entrance to the secret short-cut of the Leap-over, it is difficult to transfer impure mental states and appearances into the absolute nature. So you should know the practical guidance on forcefully transferring all mental states and appearances into the absolute nature of the clear light, reality-itself." [384]

Bodhisattva Vidyavajra then commented, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, due to being propelled by karmic energies over many eons, there is no guarantee that one will attain a life in which one has the conscious intention to accumulate collections [of merit and knowledge] and to dispel obscurations. Therefore, since all the necessary conditions are assembled right now, may the Teacher reveal the profound guidance in the swift path of liberation in one life and with one body!"

He replied, "O Vidyavajra, from beginningless time until now, due to the power of a great many negative thoughts and deeds you have been propelled through the endless cycle of existence. On some occasion due to the confluence of having accumulated good karma and having made fine prayers, you have now attained a human body

and have encountered the Dharma. Therefore, if you do not strive at this time, it will be difficult for you to attain such a body in the

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65 This refers to an eclipse.

future, and it will be difficult for you to master the profound path. With the continuation of negative karma, constantly engaging with miserable, delusive appearances, even though you have a little karma from the accumulation of merit, there is no telling what the results of that will be after many eons. [385] Thus, you should attain liberation in this very lifetime. So carefully examine this point and realize it!

To follow the profound, swift path of awakening in this lifetime, these methods and circumstances must be assembled:

- directly see your spiritual mentor as a buddha and do not displease him even for an instant;
- apply yourself to meditation, propitiatory practice, offerings, receiving empowerments, and merging your mind with that of your mentor;
- regard you companions as viras and dakinis, and unflaggingly cultivate faith and reverence for them, while avoiding all contempt, false views, disdain, scorn, ridicule, physical abuse, and deceit as if they were poison;
- regard all sentient beings as your own parents and, out of compassion and a spirit of awakening, constantly cultivate the attitude of directing all your actions to the service of others;
- recognize how all the appearances of this life are devoid of essence, like dreams and illusions;
- [think]: "this body of mine in this lifetime is something I have for only a few years and months, it is not permanent, and there is no knowing when death will come"; [386]
- [think]: "whatever I do now on behalf of my spouse and relatives, once I am dead, no one will remember what I have done for them." As an indication of this utter lack of benefit for yourself, just look at the way in which you do not recall the kindness of your own parents and other ancestors who

have cared for you!

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In short, recognizing that all the affairs of this life are as pointless as children's games, know that you must take care of yourself. Many people, such as your parents, relatives, and friends, may tell you, "If you don't strive in worldly activities, you will go hungry! You will be left out in the cold! And you will be weak and pitiful! You must apply yourself to worldly activities for your own sake and for that of your family." Longing for your happiness and well-being, they are instructing you in methods that will give rise to endless suffering. Like the blind leading the blind, there are plenty of teachers who offer bad advice with the best of intentions. However, considering that no one but a qualified spiritual mentor can instruct you in methods leading to ultimate, eternal joy, take responsibility for yourself, and recognize the importance of not taking just anyone's advice.

While accumulating sins for the sake of your parents and family, even though you wish to accomplish some benefit, [387] consider how this actually casts both yourself and others into endless miserable states of existence. [Think]: "Now this body of mine has emerged from my parents flesh and blood, and with the hope that benefit and happiness for them both may arise from this, I shall offer them the first fruits of the harvest, and I shall dress them in the best of garments. As they have brought me up with great affection, if I can now realize eternal bliss, the omniscience of the state of perfect spiritual awakening, there will be a great significance to my parents' care of my body. They will accrue vast merit, I shall repay my parents' kindness, render service to my spiritual mentor, and something of great significance will be accomplished for the sake of sentient beings." Recognizing that, entrust your innermost heart to the Dharma; roam about from one solitary retreat place to another; be content with mere sustenance, without regard to the quality of your food; be content merely to

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have protection from the rain and wind, without regard to the quality of your habitation; and apply yourself to essential practice.

If you overeat, compulsive ideation will increase, and you will succumb to spiritual sloth and distractions. If you place a priority on beautiful, fine clothes, you will fall under the influence of luxuries, and you [388] will want to show off in public. If you drink alcohol, your mind will become dyfunctional and as an ordinary meditator you will become befuddled. If you become infatuated with red, white,66 sweet and rich foods, you will run the danger of spending your whole life in the pursuit of them, while dispensing with any thoughts of virtue. Therefore, outwardly have no luxuries; inwardly have no acquisitions; have no hope in others; and have no thoughts of others giving you anything. Even if you were to die right now, like a little bird alighting on a treetop, cling to nothing in the past and have no nostalgia. You must have no boss above you, no servant beneath you, and no companions at your own level.

There are those who first leave behind their family and homeland and move abroad, where they take up with women and produce bastards. They live on earnings from reciting prayers for the dead and for warding off danger. If they hear even a word of praise, their minds become filled with pride and arrogance, and puffing up their chests, they praise themselves and abuse others. When they hear even a word of disparagement, their minds fill with hatred and anger, and they go looking for a fight. Not even knowing whether they will die right now, they tell others that they have extrasensory perception. They beat
their gums in proclaiming how high their view is. Like stray dogs, they frantically cling to their territory. [389] Like demons roving about a village, they constantly delude themselves with magic rituals. Their lives are wasted in the pursuit of material acquisitions and eminence and renown as meditators, and,

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66 Red and white foods refer to meat and dairy products.

without devoting themselves to retreat for a year or even a month, when they meet death, they do so as ordinary beings. The wise do not divulge the faults of others, but rather disclose their own defects. On the other hand, those who spend their lives fixed on attachments

and aversions, without considering their own failings, have had their life principle carried away by demons, and their minds are possessed by maras. So you must reject such evil conduct and meditate.

While not devoting themselves the slightest bit to their own spiritual practice, those who disparage and revile others who are applying themselves to virtue are people who have come under the influence of maras and demons;67 so they have been divorced from Dharma. Even though they are practicing Dharma, when many of their friends get together, they become depressed with that and retreat into solitude with the earnest desire to practice Dharma. When they are living alone, they wander everywhere, like a calf separated from its mother. Like a weasel stuffed down a hole in the ground, they cannot stay where they are; and, like a stray dog in search of food, they restlessly roam about in town. Attracted to conversation and chitchat, they seek out someone to talk to, thereby fracturing others' spiritual practice. [390] Due to having many plans, even though they have identified their own essential nature, they have no confidence in meditation and think rather of going on pilgrimage. When they are actually wandering on pilgrimage, they wish they were staying in one place or else they yearn to be back home. Those unfortunate ones are making nothing of this life or their future lives. They do not follow the practical advice they receive. Their hearts are inflamed with jealousy at others' eminence, and, without considering the exhaustion of their own merit, they revile those who are meritorious. Having no contentment, with their thoughts filled with all the

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67 Tib. dam sri.

things they want and need, they give no thought to their own total inability to do anything and rather boss the people around them. They have a hard time exerting themselves enough to tie their own belts and shoelaces, but--without paying any attention to that--they are not impressed even if others move a mountain, and they order them to do even more. When they see others wearing their cast-off clothing and eating their leftovers, they respond with stinginess, but

--without noticing that--even when others give them a mountain of food and possessions, they are still not satisfied. Such corrupt people are despised and rejected by everyone, so they have certainly not been engaging in spiritual practice.

Some people do have thoughts of Dharma, and whenever they have time, [391] they get caught up in verbal and manual virtues. Taking delight in mimicking others, people who get carried away by such behavior rack up as many conventional virtues as they can. But when they encounter a little hardship and hunger and cold, they abandon those virtues. Such people are cut off from participating in ultimate Dharma practice. Their strong emotional vacillations are like fleeting rays of sunlight through the clouds; and their busy frenzy is like a winter gale. All their companionships are of short duration, and they are rejected by everyone, so such people invariably forsake the practice, for they are constitutionally incapable of pursuing it.

People who wish to engage in pristine spiritual practice, who go to strict masters and try inordinately to please them sacrifice their own autonomy to someone else. As a result, they run the danger of blocking their own progress on the path of liberation. It is wrong to cultivate a Dharma relationship with a spiritual mentor who is temperamental, for such a person is a friend who will cast you into hell. It is wrong to cultivate a relationship with a spiritual mentor who has many needs and desires, for there is the danger that you may lose the

life force of your solemn pledges. It is wrong to cultivate a relationship with a spiritual mentor who is manipulative and who has no regard for the hardships and emotional well-being of others, [392] for your pledges will degenerate and you will fall into hell. It is wrong to cultivate a relationship with a spiritual mentor who is involved in a lot of activities, for you will be cast into hell due to your inability to serve him effectively. It is wrong to cultivate a relationship with a spiritual mentor who, out of his own self-centeredness and desire for notoriety , is enamored with those with high status and disdains those with low standing, with no regard for the emotional well-being of his disciples; for you will come to have

false views and will then fall into hell. It is wrong to cultivate a relationship with a spiritual mentor who has false views, who spends little time in meditation, who applies himself to the eight concerns of this life, and who lacks the wisdom derived through learning and reflection; for you will be hampered by not progressing beyond inferior views.

At the outset, spend a long time examining what others say of a spiritual mentor and what you observe for yourself. Then, if you rely upon one who is impeccable and replete with excellent qualities, he will show you the path of liberation, and you will not succumb to any faults or downfalls. From the time that you devote yourself to him, do not have any false views about him, even if he kills a hundred men and a hundred horses in one day. Even if he tells you to kill, to steal, and to take up with women, if you do not do so without hesitation, you will fall into Avici hell. Thus, the jinas and jinaputras have said many times that one should obey the spiritual mentor's instructions. [393] Relying upon a sublime spiritual mentor in that way and striving in essential practice for your whole life, without wasting the guidance you have received, is of the utmost importance. So recognize this!

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If disciples are not examined, they may become maras for their teacher, which is like throwing one's practical advice into a river and like giving one's food and possessions to an enemy. The best of disciples are those in whom the following qualities are present:

- disillusion and disgust with the affairs of this life
- unwavering faith in the Three Jewels
- great compassion
- little avarice
- delight in generosity
- no jealousy
- candor
- courage and fortitude
- dependability
- single-mindedness
- firm resolve

If such disciples are accepted and given guidance, something of great significance will undoubtedly be accomplished.

If disciples with the following qualities are given practical advice, eventually they will definitely turn into maras for the teacher:

- obsession with samsara
- little faith or reverence
- duplicity and deceitfulness
- no compassion
- great avarice
- jealousy
- hatefulness and irritability
- emotional instability and fickleness

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- crudeness, with no courage or fortitude [394]
- strong distraction and spiritual sloth
- attraction to entertainment and fascination with those with high status
- great self-satisfaction and no interest in others
- shallowness
- penchant for divisive speech
- fondness for dishonesty and gossip.

Examine disciples and investigate them accordingly, reject those who are unworthy vessels, and devote yourself to those who are worthy.

Now, as for practicing the instructions on the great clear light Leap-over, if you do not first engage in the profound preliminary techniques, there will be a great many obstacles and pitfalls to your practice. Therefore, in the phase of the preliminaries, apply yourself to the segregation of samsara and nirvana with respect to your body, speech, and mind. First, for the outer segregation, go to a solitary place in a deep ravine with no people around, and reflect, "In order to free all sentient beings of the three realms from the ocean of suffering of mundane existence, I shall segregate samsara from nirvana with respect to my body, speech, and mind; and I shall bring them to the state of omniscient, perfect awakening."

Then apply this to your own mind in the following way: "When I am beset with a virulent, unbearable, fatal disease, my mind will be filled with terrible anguish, and I shall groan and writhe on the ground in agony. My loved ones will repeatedly give me advice and go for a doctor. The doctor will then come, examine my pulse, then tell me the prognosis is so bad that it seems there is nothing he can do to help. So now I must quickly have many rituals done for me, for I have come to the point where I can lose everything; and I shall act

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accordingly. My family will advise me to have a divination done by a psychic and to have an astrologer make his own prognosis. When the messengers eventually return from making those requests, my family and I will ask what they said. The psychic and astrologer will say that rituals must be done on my behalf, so I must act quickly. But then hearing that all psychics and astrologers are so deeply at odds with each other that they are of no use, I fall into intense despair. Imagining many rituals being done, I finally fall on my bed, unable to rise. My lips and face move, my eyes turn upwards, whatever I drink comes out my nose; and quivering on my bed, I beg to be lifted from the depths into which I have fallen. [396] With anxiety and clinging to my human environment, I ask to be taken outside and to be consoled. I am then carried outside, but the whole earth seems deserted, and by simply casting my eyes on my surroundings, I sense I will not be here for long. My mind is then overwhelmed with unbearable grief.

Once again, out of attachment to my own home and family, I am tormented by the thought that I am about to be separated from them. I then ask to be taken back indoors, and when I am laid on my bed, all my relatives recognize that I am dying. They gather around me and take hold of my head and limbs. Clinging to my body, their faces are covered with tears. I hear them wailing and moaning. I see with my very eyes that the envoys of the Lord of Death are coming to take me away. When the agents of Yama come before me and are about to lead me away, I am unable to let go of my beloved children and wife and all my dear brothers and other relatives, even though I must. The time has come--even though I cannot bear to leave them--when I will have no choice but to go where I will not see or meet them again. I will have to make my way alone to an unknown destination, [397] with no friends or companions, leaving behind my cherished body and all my clothes, ornaments, food, wealth, and

home. By imagining that this occasion has come upon me now, forcefully arousing a sense of terror, and acting in every way as if this were happening, I train for the transitional process of dying. By so doing, I will certainly turn away from clinging to the appearances of this life.

Then imagine that all external appearances dissolve into your consciousness, bringing forth a vision of a pale sheen. That dissolves into an increasing light, and you imagine a reddish sheen like a flash of lightning. Then as that dissolves into darkness, a gloom overtakes the mind like the appearance of pitch blackness. Then there is death, and by training for the time you will die, you will turn away from obsessive clinging. Then bring to mind a limpidity and clarity like space and remain in meditative equipoise for as long as you can in a state of pervasive, clear emptiness. That is the experience of the ground clear light. Then cover your eyes with a [diaphanous] blindfold and remain in meditative equipoise focused on the appearances of the five lights. That is training in the appearances of the transitional process of reality-itself. [398] Then bring to mind the visions of the transitional process of becoming, imagine that you unimpededly go wherever you think of going, and remain in that state for awhile.

Finally, imagine that many terrifying agents of Yama catch you around the waste with lassos, strike you with various weapons, and draw you helplessly into the dark. The fierce gale of karma pushes you from behind until you come before Yama, Dharmaraja. In the presence of Dharmaraja, the great workman Attachment, bearing the head of a monkey, Delusion, bearing the head of a bull, and Hatred, bearing the head of a snake, hold a scale for weighing the pebbles of karma, a mirror that reflects good and evil, and a book of accounts registering the quantities [of good and evil deeds]. They are surrounded by innumerable workmen bearing heads that change shape. In front of them on your right is a

white, co-arisen68 devaputra; on your left is a black mara who accompanies you; and the two of them in succession report to Dharmaraja on the nature of your virtues and vices. The black mara wins his case, and finally Dharmaraja commands that the white and black pebbles of karma be put on the scale. [399] The deva and mara weigh them, the bull-headed creature examines them, and the black pebbles prove to be heavier. Examining the mirror, it is seen that evil is predominant; and upon looking at the accounts, it appears that nonvirtuous deeds are far more prevalent. Consequently, Dharmaraja immediately commands, "In this life this person has avoided

positive, virtuous deeds as if they were poison and has adopted negative vices as if they were medicine. Let these deeds fully ripen now! Take this person to the hot hells!' As if they were taking culprits to prison, the workmen all shout together in voices like a thousand peals of thunder, "Kill! Kill! Mutilate! Mutilate!" and drive many sentient beings to hell. There you are surrounded by an unbroken, seamless, burning, metal ground. The space around you is entirely filled with flickering tongues of flame.

In the Resuscitation hell, hostile beings regard each other as deadly enemies, battle to the death with various weapons, then they are revitalized. In the Black Line hell, lines are drawn on one's body, which is then dismembered with a burning metal saw. In the Confinement and Destruction hell, one is placed in a burning metal mortar and pulverized with a red-hot pestle. [400] In the Wailing hell, one suffers due to being trapped inside a blazing, metal building with no doors. In the Shrieking hell, one is forced into a two-story, blazing, metal building and is incinerated there. In the Hot hell, one is run through with a blazing, metal trident. In the Scorching hell, one is immersed in molten iron, copper, and bronze. In Avici hell, one is incinerated together with a torch of flaming iron. Imagine taking on all the sufferings of those hells, and really act

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68 This deva is co-arisen with yourself.

out the various cries and expressions of those experiencing them. Experiencing such terror and despair is the segregation with respect to the mind. Physically writhing on the ground, rising up, and flailing your limbs is the segregation with respect to the body. Orally wailing and screaming is the way of making the segregation with respect to the speech.

In the cold hells the ground all around one is frozen and one is crushed under a blizzard. There are eight cold hells called the Blister, the Perforated Blister, the Achu, the Wailing, the Chattering Teeth, the Splintered like a Lotus, the Splintered like an Utpala, and the Splintered like a Great Lotus. [401] Imagine taking upon

yourself the miseries of the eight cold hells and the peripheral, minor hells, and so forth. Act out the expressions and cries of beings there, and constantly roll on the ground and move about in various ways as if you were in agony. Practice to the point that you actually feel that you are taking on such suffering. Likewise, act as if you were experiencing the hunger and thirst of the pretas, the enforced labor, slaying and so on of animals, the birth, aging, sickness, and death of humans, the conflicts of the asuras, and the death and downfall of the devas. Physically crouch down, jump, run, get up, move around, sit, move you limbs and so on; orally make various sounds; and mentally imagine taking on various experiences of joy and sorrow. Experiencing that is the phase of training for the intermediate state.

Cultivate a spirit of emergence and a sense of disillusionment with respect to the cycle of existence to the point at which you are as nauseated as a person with hepatitis being offered cooked food. This will cause you turn away from craving for samsara and apply yourself to the sublime Dharma for the time being; and ultimately it will cause samsara to be dredged from its depths. If you do not bring the visions of the transitional process to mind and experience them, [402] a spirit of emergence will not arise from the depths of your being. As a

result of not taking those experiences to heart, even though you hear accounts of the sufferings of dying and the cycle of existence, you will regard them merely as conditions somewhere else, and there will be only the remotest chance that you will apply their significance to your own mind-stream. Thus, if you bring them to your own mind and train in those appearances, their significance will certainly come to you. So appreciate the importance of this mind training!

When you have finished training in repeatedly bringing all those appearances of samsara to mind, instantly transform your appearances and imagine this external, inanimate universe as emptiness, the absolute nature free of conceptual elaborations. With this nature, imagine the whole earth as being free of all rough surfaces such as jagged mountains, rugged, rocky ravines, and thorn trees. Imagine its surface to be soft and even like the palm of a

young woman and expansive like the sky, such that it gives when you press on it and rebounds when you lift off from it. Aromatic fragrances loft from grassy hills of medicinal herbs. The entire ground is covered by blossoming flowers of various colors. [403] The sky is covered with checkered patterns of rainbows and lattices of light rays. Clouds of offerings of sensory objects float and billow up in the sky like summer mist rising from the ocean. Imagine purifying springs, ponds bearing the eight qualities of ambrosia, wish-fulfilling trees, beautiful, exquisite birds of various species, different kinds of intelligent forest creatures, emanated circles of male and female bodhisattvas adorned with the signs and symbols of enlightenment, who are calm, fresh, limpid, and free of contamination, and young people sixteen years of age adorned with beautiful, attractive ornaments and garments, casually strolling along the ground.

In the center of this unimaginable, innumerable assembly of invincible lotus blossoms, imagine yourself upon a Dharma throne as the Bhagavan, the Jina Sakyamuni, with your body radiant with light like a golden mountain

embraced by a hundred thousand suns. You sit with your legs in the vajrasana position. Your right hand touches the earth, and your left is in the mudra of meditative equipoise. [404] Bearing a calm and smiling countenance, you are clothed with the three kinds of robes. You are adorned with the excellent thirty two signs and eighty symbols of enlightenment. From the tip of every one of your body hairs, inconceivable, countless trillions of light rays are emitted, pervading everywhere throughout the three realms. At the tip of each light ray, a great ray of light takes on the form of various, individual sentient beings, with their race, language, and customs, and dispels the ignorance of each one, like the sun dispelling darkness; and it subdues their mind-streams by revealing the Dharma, and draws them into spiritual practice. Imagine everyone transforming into manifestations of male and female bodhisattvas, filling to overflowing the buddha-field you have created, and listening to the Dharma. You recite The Heart Sutra and so forth, and explain the Dharma. Imagine that they all come to know the great, ultimate, absolute nature; and as the illusory fictions of the phenomenal world

dissolve into the original, primordial ground, the absolute nature of Samantabhadra, they become enlightened and the whole of samsara of the three realms becomes empty. By settling in meditative equipoise in that awareness, you establish the circumstances for purifying your buddha-field. And in the meantime, by engaging in the conduct of the Three Jewels, [405] you are seen as the Teacher of all sentient beings, and outer, inner, and secret obstacles are dispelled. Finally, you emanate your buddha-field, with its Teacher and circle of disciples, you experience your own goal of the dharmakaya, and by the very force of that the goals of others will be accomplished with the power of great blessings. That is called the outer segregation of the body, speech, and mind.

The following is the inner segregation of the body, speech, and mind. On the top of your head of your normal body imagine the deva seed of the white

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syllable A in the form of an orb of dim light. Imagine the causes of birth as a deva, together with the karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities, converging in the form of a dim white light and dissolving into that seed. At your throat visualize as before the asura seed of SU in the form of a yellow orb of light, and imagine the causes of birth as an asura, together with all the karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities, converging in the form of greenish yellow light and dissolving into the SU. At your heart visualize the human seed in the form of a light blue NRI. Rays of light are emitted from it, drawing in all the causes of birth as a human, together with the karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities, and imagine them dissolving into the NRI. At your navel visualize the animal seed of a dark red TRI, and as before, [406] imagine all the karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities that act as causes for rebirth as an animal being drawn in and dissolving into the TRI. At your genital region visualize rays of light being emitted from the preta seed of a gray PRE, drawing in all the karma, mental afflictions, and habitual propensities that act as causes for rebirth as a preta, together with the miseries associated with such rebirth, and imagine them dissolving into the PRE. On the soles of your feet imagine light emanating from the hell seed-syllable of a black, shimmering DU, retracting in the form of black

light all the karma, mental afflictions, sins, obscurations, and habitual propensities in the minds of all sentient beings that act as causes for rebirth in hell, together with the miseries of such rebirth. Imagine them all dissolving into that seed, leaving not even a residual trace behind. That is the training.

Then on the crown of your head imagine the essential nature of the bodies of all the tathagatas as a white OM, blazing with greater brilliance than the light of a hundred thousand suns. The light emanated from that syllable draws in all the inexhaustible ornamental wheels of the bodies of the jinas and jinaputras

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of the three times in the form of a mass of white light, which dissolves into the white OM. At your throat imagine the seed of enlightened speech as a red AH, which emanates light as before, drawing in all the inexhaustible wheels of the speech of all the jinas and jinaputras of the three times in the form of a mass of red light, which dissolves into the AH. [407] At your heart imagine the seed of the enlightened mind as a dark blue HUM, which blazes with light and emanates light rays, drawing in all the inexhaustible wheels of the minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of the jinas and jinaputras of the three times in the form of a mass of dark blue light, which dissolves into the HUM.

Then imagine roaring flames of white, red, and dark blue light rays blazing forth from the purifying three vajra essences, utterly incinerating all the seeds of hell, together with their habitual propensities. Recite OM, AH, HUM, and imagine them likewise incinerating the cycle of existence in both reverse and forward order. Do not let your consciousness be distracted elsewhere; do not interrupt this with human speech; and recognize the importance of meditating and reciting without letting your meditation cushion grow cold. At the conclusion, the mass of light grows larger, totally incinerating illnesses, malevolent spirits, sins, obscurations, habitual propensities, and the material aggregate of flesh and blood. Then visualize your body as a rainbow or as an empty appearance, a mass of light like a reflection in a mirror, and recite. Recite the vajra-recitation of the three seeds, together with its ancillaries, one hundred thousand times for each of the seeds to be purified, [408]

making a total of seven hundred thousand recitations.

As a result of meditation in that way without distraction and single-pointed recitations uninterrupted by idle chatter, actual experiences in your dreams may include a sense of pristine space, the occurrence of extraordinary experiential realizations, ascending to the peak of a mountain that reaches to the

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heights of the sky, flying in the sky, puss, blood, and lymph oozing from your body, many parasites emerging from your body, intentionally torching a building, seeing buddha-fields, and having visions of deities. Those experiences arise as signs of having purified all illnesses, malevolent spirits, sins, and obscurations.

The foregoing is called segregation. Your own ground, which consists of spontaneous displays of the three embodiments, is contaminated by, and mixed with, the taints of habitual propensities of the three realms. Those practices purify the cycle of existence in the absolute nature, make the three embodiments manifest, and thereby bring about a segregation. The seeds that produce the body are incinerated, the vajra-body is made manifest, and that is called the segregation of the body. The mantras are recited verbally, the vajra-speech is made manifest, and that is called the segregation of the speech. The severance of the mental stream of delusive conceptualization, [409] and the meditation on the generation [of yourself and your environment as a buddha and a buddha-field] is called the segregation of the mind. That is analogous to a method for separating the kernel from the chaff, throwing away the chaff, and keeping the kernel.

By inwardly making such a segregation, in the short-term habitual propensities and obscurations are purified, and there will be no obstacles or interferences to your life and spiritual practice; and finally you will become a buddha, as your body, speech, and mind are displayed as the three vajras.

After that has been completed, samsara and nirvana are to be secretly segregated with respect to your body, speech, and mind. First of all, samsara and nirvana are to be segregated with respect to your body as follows. All the inexhaustible ornamental wheels of the

bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, gurus, jinas, and jinaputras of the ten directions and the three times dissolve into yourself in the form of a mass of five-colored light. Imagine that they completely clear out all illnesses,

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malevolent spirits, sins, obscurations, habitual propensities, and material aggregates, and you expand into the nature of all-pervasive space; and remain for awhile in that meditative equipoise.

Then join your palms above the crown of your head while spreading out your elbows. Join the soles of your feet [410] and stand with your knees spread out to the sides. Imagine that your body instantly transforms into a blazing, three-pronged, meteorite vajra, like a rainbow appearing in the sky. Know that the upper central prong symbolizes the primordial wisdom of the essential nature of emptiness; the right prong symbolizes the primordial wisdom of the nature of luminosity; and the left prong symbolizes the primordial wisdom of all-pervasive compassion. Know that the lower central prong symbolizes the dharmakaya, the right prong symbolizes the sambhogakaya, and the left prong symbolizes the nirmanakaya. Visualize the natural luster of primordial wisdom in the form of a blazing mass of fire, and remain in meditative equipoise without distraction for as long as seems fit.

When you can no longer sit like that, while maintaining the same visualization as before, alternate between lying on your back and sitting in the squatting position. By diligently meditating like that for a sustained period, all demons and obstructive forces will see your body as a blazing vajra, and they will not be able to come within seven yojanas of you; and finally your body will awaken in the nature of the vajra-body. [411]

Second, for segregating the speech, first there is the practice of sealing [with HUM]. To unify external appearances, imagine a blue syllable HUM in your mouth, which successively emits white, yellow, red, and green HUMs, completely filling and pervading the whole of space. Imagine all the elements of earth, water, fire, and air transforming into the nature of HUM, without leaving even a trace

of the elements behind. To unify your own internal body, imagine

all the external HUMs converging one by one and entering your mouth. The whole interior of your body is filled with HUMs, and your entire body, from the top of your head to the soles of your feet, consists of HUMs right down to the atomic level. Imagine your body in the dark blue, wrathful and ferocious form of Vajrapani. Imagine that your right hand holds a vajra and your left hand holds a serpent noose. You stand powerfully and haughtily, with your legs spread wide apart, in the midst of a blazing fire of primordial wisdom. Everything that has been unified externally and internally takes on the pleasing sound of gently melodious HUM. That leads to the realization of appearances being like illusions, and it has the purpose of liberating your body as being devoid of an inherent nature. [412]

As for training in power, the training with respect to external appearances is as follows. From your mouth, a powerful, sharp, darting, dark blue HUM, one cubit in length, shoots forth like a lightning bolt, striking every physical object such as mountains, boulders, and stones, thoroughly penetrating each one. Imagine that everything transforms into empty space, leaving not even a trace behind, and while in that state powerfully and harshly recite HUM. Then rest without focusing on anything at all.

The training in power with respect to your own body is as follows. Imagine that a dark blue HUM, one cubit in length, emerges from your body in its ordinary state. Penetrating straight into the exterior and interior of your body, it pierces in every direction, leaving no spot untouched. Imagine your body disintegrating into nothingness, and recite HUM many times in a fierce, harsh voice. As a result, if the flesh of your body goes into little spasms and swelling occurs, those are signs of having trained in power with respect to your body. The purpose of that is to realize the lack of inherent existence of

appearances, to subdue the demon of reification, and to powerfully realize emptiness.

The practice of malleability is as follows. While sitting cross-legged

on a comfortable cushion, imagine a dark blue HUM at your heart. [413] From it a strand of light rays of many dark blue HUMs issues forth from your mouth. It coils clockwise around the base of a meditative support in front of you such as a stick. The first HUM that emerged stands on top of the meditative support, and while directly thrusting your attention at that, slowly and melodiously chant the sound of HUM. Then forcefully concentrate on that strand of HUMs gradually unraveling from the meditative support, imagine finally drawing it back into your heart, and come to rest. Then alternately visualize white, yellow, red, and green HUMs. Repeated training of that sort will in the short-term dispel obstacles that make your channels dysfunctional, and finally it will provide you with mastery over your vital energies and mind.

Once again visualize yourself as dark blue, wrathful, and ferocious Vajrapani, holding aloft a meteorite vajra in your right hand, and with your left hand in the threatening gesture holding a serpent noose. From the HUM at your heart, HUMs are emitted like swirling particles of dust in the sunlight. All appearances of samsara and nirvana, including the animate and inanimate universe and all sensory objects, dissolve into the syllables HUM like salt dissolving into water, leaving not even a trace behind. [414] Imagine drawing them back in again, entering your mouth and filling your body, causing it to increase in size until it pervades the entire domain of space. Visualize HUMs emanating throughout the whole of samsara and nirvana, completely pervading it like a covering of mist, and on occasion transform them into white, yellow, red, and green forms. Do not let your attention be distracted elsewhere, and recognize the importance of this. In the short term that practice will make you

invulnerable to all interferences, and its final aim is to dissolve your body into minute particles and to liberate your awareness as the dharmakaya.

This is the way to enter the path. Imagine your body transforming into a blazing white syllable HUM, one cubit above the ground, tilting this way and that way, and imagine yourself gradually moving throughout all the realms of the six types of sentient beings of the enduring billionfold world-systems, each with its Mt. Meru, four

continents, and subcontinents. Then, like an arrow shot by a powerful archer, you successively proceed to Abhirati in the east, Srimat in the south, Sukhavati in the west, Karmaprapurana in the north, and to Ghanavyuha in the center. [415] Imagine that you behold the five classes of buddhas and receive teachings, prophecies, and empowerments from them. While visualizing that, beautifully, slowly, and melodiously recite HUM. That serves the needs of sentient beings and purifies the buddha-fields, and by so doing, those ends will finally be accomplished. In the short term it also has the effect of bringing about a sense of disillusionment, disgust, and revulsion toward all activities of samsara.

By applying yourself in those ways to the practice of segregation with respect to the speech, your speech will awaken as a display of the vajra-speech. When all verbal defects vanish and you attract others with the sweetness of your voice, those are signs of purification.

Now to strive to segregate the mind, go to a very remote, solitary place where there are no thorns to meditative stabilization. Then, in order to dispel great, disturbing, obstructive forces that may arise due to physical disturbances brought on by the preceding practices, first of all settle in your natural state: motionlessly relax your body in whatever way is comfortable, like an unthinking corpse in a charnel ground. Let your voice be silent like a lute with its strings cut. Rest your mind in an unmodified state, like the primordial presence of space.

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[416] Remain for a long time in those three ways. That pacifies all illnesses due to disturbances of the elements and unfavorable circumstances, and your body, speech, and mind naturally calm down. The ultimate purpose of that practice is to experience the dharmakaya, free of activity .

To enter into your own innate stability ,69 position your body in the sevenfold posture of Vairocana, direct your gaze over the tip of your nose, and rest in meditative equipoise, letting your experienced thoughts be, without intervention. Then assume the bodhisattva gaze, with your eyes directed about six feet in front of you, and

remain with a sense of limitless consciousness. Then assume a ferocious gaze, standing powerfully and haughtily, with your legs spread wide apart. Point your right hand to the sky in a threatening gesture, point your attention in the same direction, and bellow out 'Ha Ha!' Reach out with your left hand in a threatening gesture, point it to the sky, and ferociously bellow forth 'Hi Hi!' Then rest without directing your attention to any appearances. That will empower your awareness in the great depths of reality-itself.

By segregating samsara and nirvana in those ways, [417] you will become a suitable vessel for the unsurpassed secret, and your body, speech, and mind will transform into the nature of the three vajras. Reinforce this external, internal, and secret segregation of the body, speech, and mind by practicing that for no less than eighty days, and not for just a day or two. As explained previously, it is of crucial importance that you practice that until you experience all the signs and qualities of having dispelled the problems and defects of your body, speech, and mind and of having purified sins and obscurations. So practice that for a long time.

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69 Tib. sor gzhug pa. The second definition of so in the Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo is "rang sa'm rang tshugs thub pa'i rten gzhi dang nus pa," translated as "one's own state, or a self-sufficient basis and power" (p. 2952). Thus, this practice is aimed at entering into such a state.

Now as for the stages of the main practice, at first you determine the ground by way of the Breakthrough, then the initial moment of impure consciousness emerges in the aspect of an object, a subsequent conceptualization fastens onto it, and delusion sets in. Now, in contrast, in the Leap-over, the initial moment of consciousness is transformed into an appearance of clear light, and by experiencing the very nature of consciousness, all impure appearances dissolve into the absolute nature and vanish. Knowing how that occurs is the indispensable, sublime point of the Leap-over, so recognize it!

If you do not recognize this vital point, however much you meditate,

you will go astray on the path of dualistic grasping, [418] and you will not progress along the grounds and paths of liberation. Thus, once you have truly realized the manner in which the whole of samsara and nirvana is none other than your own appearances, finally all mental states and appearances of the impure cycle of existence will forcefully be transformed into displays of the clear light, reality itself. So this is the practical guidance on the great transference. By truly recognizing the entrance to this path with the wisdom of realizing identitylessness, originally pure reality-itself, beyond mental investigation, the absolute nature free of conceptual elaboration, will be experienced with the eye of expansive wisdom. Unlike nebulous, obscure meditations and intellectual fabrications, with the eye of wisdom you directly see the precious, spontaneously present absolute nature, the reality-itself of the expanse of clear light.

To practice these instructions, at the outset you must firm up your posture, for if this is not done, the absolute nature, bindus, and the vital energies will be dispersed in all the channels and elements of the body, and they will not manifest. As an analogy, if a snake is not squeezed, its limbs will not become

evident, but if it is, they appear. The posture is accordingly of tremendous importance. [419]

First, the lion's posture is as follows. Join the soles of your feet in front of you. Plant your vajra-fists on the ground between your legs, and look up into the sky. That is the dharmakaya posture and gaze. For the sambhogakaya posture, plant your knees and elbows on the ground and support your cheeks with your palms. Point the soles of your feet outward, and gaze directly in front of you. However, if appearances of the clear light do not manifest, alternately run your gaze to the left and right and up and down. Rest your gaze wherever those appearances are most clear. For the nirmanakaya posture plant the soles of your feet on the ground, press your chest against your knees and clasp your knees with both hands while interlacing your fingers. Straighten your spine, and gaze downwards.

Here is the significance of those postures. With the dharmakaya

posture, the soles of the feet are joined in order to constrain the afflictive vital energies in their own place. The vajra-fists are placed on the ground to cut off the pathways of the afflictions. The gaze is directed upwards to open the vision of primordial wisdom. With the sambhogakaya posture, pointing the soles outward causes the vital energies to flow easily. [420] Pressing your knees against your chest balances the heat and cold elements of the body. Pointing your knees and elbows at the ground blocks the impure apertures. Supporting your cheeks with your palms balances bliss and emptiness. By directing your gaze straight in front of you, primordial wisdom settles in its own luminosity. With the nirmanakaya posture, the soles of your feet press on the air mandala in order to suppress the power of the karmic vital energies. By pressing together the fire mandala of the thighs and the fire mandala of the belly, the impure vital energies of samsara are extinguished right where they are. By pressing together the water

mandala of the knees and the fire mandala of the palms, the heat and cold elements of the body are balanced. By pressing together the fire mandala of the palms and the fire mandala of the armpits, cold disorders are dispelled. By pressing together the water mandala of the backs of the hands and the water mandala of the throat, heat disorders are dispelled. By gazing downwards, the eye of omniscience is opened. Even if you look straight ahead or turn your gaze upwards, the eye of omniscience is still opened, so there is no difference. You may direct your gaze wherever you find the greatest clarity. [421]

Moreover, it is not necessary to use all three postures. Rather, you may stay in any of the postures that facilitates the arising of the clear light and that you find comfortable and suitable. If you like variety, you may shift from one posture to the other and from time to time apply yourself to other spiritual practices. If you want nothing complicated, strive in meditation continuously throughout the day and night. Those who can meditate only during the day and not through the night should constantly practice throughout the day. The practice is to have three special sessions during the night and to intermittently train in the dying process.70

The important thing for the senses is that you look with eyes partially open and that you do not suddenly open them wide, for that will dull your vision, and it will prevent the appearances of the clear light from manifesting; so do not rigidly fix your gaze. The important thing for the vital energies is that you practice breathing gently through your mouth through a little opening between your lips and teeth; and pause for a moment with the breath exhaled. As for the object of your gaze, in the beginning for about one month, during the daytime direct your gaze one cubit71 from the sun; then the [practice during the]

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70 This refers to the preceding practice of imagining the dying process as a preparation to the main practice of the Leap-over.
71 To protect your eyes, it may be better to direct the gaze about six feet away from the sun.

night will clear away any problems of heat increasing in the eyes due to the sun.72 In order to achieve stability in the clear light, gaze at the moon in the same way. [422] At night if you gaze at a flame, by looking above it with your eyes half open, at first you will see nothing more than something like an orange bale of hay. After awhile, the absolute nature will appear and bindus will arise in the form of quivering lines. Finally, beautiful, limpid visions of the absolute nature and bindus will appear clearly and extensively. Remain with your body unmoving like a corpse in a charnel ground; keep your voice silent, avoiding all articulation; and do not exhale through your nose but slowly breathe through your mouth without impeding or forcing it. That is the reliance upon the crucial point of letting the channels and vital energies be, without retention or manipulation. Remain without moving from the state in which consciousness experientially emerges as the clear light, without the mind being modified in any way. Wherever you are, by keeping the body straight, all the channels and vital energies will be straight, and once the mind has dissolved into empty awareness, you will be stabilized in that state.

The explanation of the channels and bindus of the path according to

this yana is called Ati-anu, so you should come to know them correctly. The mouth is the aperture through which coarse, impure mental afflictions, vital energies, and mental states manifest, and the nose is the subtle aperture for subtle afflictions, vital energies, and mental states. Here is the way they move. In the lungs, [423] channels having the width of a straw of wheat are filled with that which is called the exhaled and inhaled breaths. If they increase, heat disorders arise, if they decrease, cold disorders occur, and if the breath flows smoothly, there is a balance of the heat and cold elements of the body. In one day, there are 21,600

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72 Although the daytime practice of gazing near the sun may impair one's vision, it is said that the nighttime practice of gazing at the moon may actually enhance one's vision. Most important is that one carefully examine whether one's practice is damaging one's eyesight and to alter the practice if that occurs.

breaths, which are like mounts for mental ideation. Therefore, even though there are profound methods for forcefully constraining the vital energies and mind by retaining and manipulating the channels and breath, they may be enormously obstructive and misleading.

The six kinds of lamps73 of the ground of the nature of existence are the avenues by which primordial wisdom arises, and the eyes are the evident apertures of primordial wisdom. The ears are the hidden apertures of subtle primordial wisdom, and they are the pathways by which consciousness apprehends appearances, so you train in their sounds. Through the evident apertures of primordial wisdom, you train in the clear light that illuminates the darkness. Dream appearances are the avenues to the manifestation of stainless vision, and by familiarizing yourself with the clear light, emanation, and transformation, the appearances in the transitional process of becoming can be emanated and transformed. From that you can emanate a pristine nirmanakaya buddha-field and accustom yourself to transforming the appearances of the intermediate state.

[424] Here in order to experience the visions of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms there are three kinds of lamps of the vessel.

The quintessence of the body is the citta lamp of the flesh at the heart, the inside of which is soft white. This is called the lamp of the channels, the quintessence of the channels, and hollow crystal kati channel. It is a single channel, one-eighth the width of a hair of a horse's tail, with two branches that penetrate inside the heart like the horns of a wild ox. They curve around the back of the ears and come to the pupils of the eyes. Their root is the heart, their trunk is the channels, and their fruit is the eyes.

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73 The use of the term lamp (Tib. sgron me) is, of course, a metaphor, for the essential nature of these lamps is luminosity.

The quintessence of the apertures is called the fluid Lasso lamp. That consists of three kinds of lamps of the vessel. Although the three kinds of lamps of the vessel are given three names, in reality they refer to the same thing, like a root, trunk, and fruit. Thus, in the context of the path, they are simply called the fluid lasso lamp.

As for the three kinds of lamps of the vital essence, the lamp of the pristine absolute nature is the quintessence of the five outer elements. The transformation of impurities into the five-colored lights of the empty essential nature of the quintessence is called the absolute nature, and because of the purification of the reification of impurities, it is called pristine. The element appearing as space, transformed into the quintessence, is blue and light blue. The element appearing [425] as water, transformed into the quintessence, is white and gray. The element appearing as fire, transformed into the quintessence, is red and brown. The element appearing as earth, transformed into the quintessence, is yellow, pale yellow, and dark yellow. The element of air, transformed into the quintessence, appears as green, tan, and light green.

At first, in whatever color the impure visions appear, when they are transformed into the absolute nature, they still appear in that same color. As for the visions of the absolute nature, at first they are of the nature of such things as the sun, moon, and a flame, bearing all five colors, filled with rainbow patterns of the absolute nature, like brilliant brocade. This rainbow weave arises as horizontal

images. Beginners may achieve stability in this by gazing for a month at the sun and a crystal during the daytime, at the moon during the nighttime, and by gazing at a flame while indoors. At the beginning, shimmering images arise, after awhile they become more stable, and finally they remain motionless. At that time, look at a clear window, dispense with the flaws of enjoying or not enjoying the beauty or lack of beauty of the light images. Then

a whitish blue emerges which is not that of the external sky, but know that it is important to rest in a state without attraction or aversion to its qualities. [426]

To transform the five inner elements into quintessences, the element of the quintessence of the mind is transformed into blue and it appears as such; the element of the quintessence of the blood transforms into the color white and appears as such; the element of the quintessence of the flesh transforms into the color yellow and appears as such; the element of the quintessence of warmth transforms into the color red and appears as such; and the element of the quintessence of the breath transforms into the color green, and appears as such.

As for the lamp of the empty bindu, the five quintessences appear in circular forms, so they are called bindus. Although they are spherical, without corners, in your vision they appear like concentric circles due to throwing a stone in a pond. The interior of the so-called hollow crystal kati channel is filled with the lights of the five quintessences, and a form of an indestructible bindu is present in that space. By gazing at that with the eye of wisdom, the interior of that channel becomes evident and arises in the form of outer appearances. Without grasping onto them, your own channels will illuminate themselves. If you grasp [427] onto the visions of the absolute nature as being external and onto awareness as being internal, you will fall into the error of dualistic grasping.

In the domain of that pristine, absolute nature, the lusters of awareness called vajra-strands appear like moving, floating threads of gold. That is the initial phase. After awhile they appear like pearls threaded on a string, and finally they emerge in the form of full and

half-lattices. They are the basis from which the two kinds of lamps of vital essence arise, called the lamp of self-arisen wisdom and the self-knowing sugatagarbha.

The four lamps of the path of appearances are the fluid lasso lamp, the lamp of the pristine absolute nature, the lamp of the empty bindu, and the lamp

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of self-arisen wisdom. The four lamps of the contemplative path are combined in one. Know that synthesizing them, then applying yourself to practice is of the utmost importance. If you practice in that way, unlike the mentally constructed, vague meditation as in the Breakthrough--the reality-itself of the clear light will directly appear to your senses, so they are called the direct visions of reality-itself. This is not like [428] meditating on substantial, human- like deities that are strenuously conjured up by the mind, as in the stage of generation. This alone is the practical instruction for achieving stability in the great experiential displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms, thereby liberating the actual three embodiments within yourself. This is superior to the ordinary kinds of transference involving the three recognitions, 73 a path by which you visualize shapes and colors and propel yourself aloft, as it were. This has the distinction of the great transference by which you transform all appearances and mental states of samsara and nirvana into the absolute nature of reality-itself.

Due to continuously practicing single-pointedly in that way, the potency of the vase empowerment strikes the materiality of your body, so that you have no wish to move your body; due to the potency of the secret empowerment permeating your speech patterns, you have no wish to speak; and due to the potency of the wisdom empowerment striking your mental continuum, your attention remains wherever you place it. This is real quiescence that is devoid of signs. Thus, since all coarse and subtle ideation is calmed in the ocean of the original ground, it is quiescent; and since awareness remains without fluctuation in its own state, it is still.74

By transforming appearances and mental states into displays of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms, [429] there is an exceptional

vision of the clear-light appearances of reality-itself, so this is called insight. From the impure

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73 The three recognitions (Tib. 'du shes gsum) are recognizing the channels as the path, one's own consciousness as the traveler on the path, and a buddha-field as one's destination.
74 This sentence gives an etymology of the Tibetan term zhi gnas (Skt. samatha), translated here as meditative quiescence.

state of samsara, since you truly know the reality-itself of the Breakthrough, the nature of existence of suchness, you see the truth of reality-itself. Due to achieving a great, unprecedented vision of reality-itself, this is the Very Joyful [ground]. With the first visions of the Leap-over, you come to the confidence of never returning to samsara, so you implicitly achieve the first ground of the sutra path. On the mantra path, all delusive appearances and mental states come to maturation in the nature of the clear light, reality-itself; ignorance is transformed into awareness, and you implicitly achieve the ground in which awareness holds its own ground. At this time, even if you die and are interrupted [in your practice], you will be reborn as a tulku, and you will have embarked on the path of liberation. The outer signs are that the appearances of the absolute nature are majestic and stable, as if the curtain on them had been opened; and bindus appear, ranging from the size of fish eyes to thumb rings.

This is the way the experiential visions progress. Initially, vital energy fills you inside from your heart up to your throat, or various sorts of illnesses or disagreeable pains may occur. [430] Randomly moving throughout the exterior and interior of your body, staying in no one place for long, these disturbances arise due to the potency of the vital energy of primordial wisdom striking the ascending wind. After awhile, they increase and your throat may become sore and blocked so that food is obstructed and coughed out. You may lose your appetite, have trouble breathing, and lose your voice. Then they increase yet further, and disturbances arise due to the potency of the vital energy of primordial wisdom striking the life-sustaining wind. Then you may experience mood swings from joy to sorrow and from

desire to hatred. Due to the potency of the vital energy of primordial wisdom striking the descending wind, when the disturbances increase, urine and excrement are blocked and cannot be excreted, and when the disturbances subside, they are expelled constantly. Due to the

potency of the vital energy of primordial wisdom striking the pervasive wind, when those disturbances increase, the body becomes swollen, and when they decrease, all the flesh of your body withers as if it were becoming a corpse. Due to the potency of the vital energy of primordial wisdom striking the fire accompanying wind, when the disturbances increase, sweat emerges from the body and great heat arises; [431] and when they subside, you get goose bumps, your complexion deteriorates, and you shiver with cold.

Finally, all the winds combine and enter the channels and elements of the body, and sharp pains arise in all the channels. Movements of the winds permeate your whole body, inside and outside, giving rise to various illnesses such as combined heat and cold disorders. The body becomes swollen, boils and sores appear, dire illnesses arise, medications and divinations go awry, bad omens appear, and individual channels and joints become painful. Gout, rheumatoid arthritis, and lymph disorders may arise, and you may become lame, blind, deaf, or mute, and may pass out. Know that various random kinds of pains may arise in the body.

You may engage in various kinds of behavior, acting coquettishly or shamelessly, like someone afflicted with a disease. In short, know fully well that due to the functions of the channels, winds, and elements, these bodily pains will not be the same for everyone, so there is no one criterion for recognizing them. [432]

As for your speech, you may find yourself singing various songs and melodies, babbling, speaking offensively, having your behavior not conform to your speech, not living in accord with your words and acting contrary to them, and speaking uncontrollably as if your words were uttered by an insane person. Such speech is nonsensical and random, So recognize this!

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Like the noises made by a madman, your mind may ramble aimlessly, without being able to remedy or alter it in any way. Due to the disorders in your heart and life force channel, at times you may weep, groan, sigh, exhale forcefully, or constantly want to be on the move, without being able to remain in one place. Your environment may seem so miserable that you do not want to stay where you are, and you may constantly experience a wide range of confused emotions. So recognize this! You may have various sorts of visions of gods and demons or random sensations of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and so on. These are the outer signs of the appearances of the clear light.

At the beginning stage, remain motionlessly with your face completely covered, [433] and bindus from the size of the dots on dice up to the size of thumb rings will appear. At times, the visions of the absolute nature, together with the bindus, will not be evident, but the luster of awareness will appear in forms called vajra-strands. At times the bindus of the absolute nature will not arise, then they will fluctuate in size, and they will become unclear, no matter how much you try. On occasion, the visions of the absolute nature will repeatedly appear in the expanse of clear light in spherical forms of five-colored lights. Those are the criteria of familiarity with the practice.

At this time, even if your life comes to an end, you will go straight to a nirmanakaya buddha-field, with no intermediate state. By gaining greater familiarity with this practice, the visions of the absolute nature will appear resplendently like loosely woven cloth, and they will appear in the sky in the form of dangling lattices and half-lattices. In the midst of the visions of the absolute nature, all sorts of images may appear, such as stupas, lotuses, white conches, wheels, vajras, jewels, swastikas, swords, spear-tips, images like stacks of books, [434] and various forms of letters and animals. Whatever appears, those are visions of the absolute nature, so know that it is important not to

mistake them for bindus. Bindus will appear in round shapes, gradually growing from the size of thumb rings to the size of cups and on to the size of round shields.

At the beginning stage, the lights of awareness, called vajra-strands, no broader than a hair's width, radiant like the sheen of gold, appear to move to and fro, never at rest, like hairs moving in the breeze. Even as they stabilize a little bit, they become clear and lustrous, temporarily wavy, and they slow down somewhat, appearing like deer running across a mountainside. Then as you become somewhat more accustomed to the practice, they appear like strung pearls, and they slowly circle around the peripheries of the bindus of the absolute nature, like bees circling flowers. Their clear and lustrous appearance is an indication of the manifestation of awareness. Their fine, wavy shapes indicate liberation due to the channels, and their moving to and fro indicates liberation due to the vital energies. Due to the qualities of purifying the bindus, [435] the presence of bindus on curves [of the strands] indicates that one will be liberated. By the power of meditation, they appear in the forms of lattices and half-lattices, transparent like crystal, radiant like gold, and like necklaces of medium-sized strung crystals. The criterion of having thoroughly familiarized oneself with the practice is that they appear indeterminately, but they remain stable, without moving or vibrating. In this case, the name of the cause is also given to the result, and that is the vajra-strand luster of awareness. They are the luster of awareness, so they gradually become as stable as awareness itself. They are not the real, self-arisen lamps of awareness and wisdom.

Once the beginner's phase has passed, the visions of the absolute nature become beautiful, clear, and stable, and they take on various divine forms. Although they may increase and decrease, before a single inner sign has arisen, the appearances of such outer signs are premature, like a dzaki flower that

blooms out of season. So that does not constitute progress in terms of experiential realization. Even when the inner signs occur, the

outer bindus of the absolute nature may become indistinct. That happens to some people who have a dominant water element, [436] and the elements of their channels are such that the development of their experiential realizations proceedst like a slow foot race. If that is mistakenly identified as progress in meditative experience and as reaching consummate awareness, even if visions occur that would seemingly indicate the extinction into reality-itself, in fact one has in no way gone beyond ordinary consciousness. Indeed, one is proceeding in the opposite direction, contrary to the tantras, so this is an enormous error. It is important to know this.

Even if muddled outer signs and vivid images are present, recognize the importance of the emergence of the inner signs. Although experiential visions may appear to your inner consciousness, if the outer signs are unclear, that indicates that you will not be able to gaze at the clear light for sustained periods, and there will be obstacles. Know this as well. When experiential visions homogeneously arise inwardly, the visions of the Breakthrough are aroused, causing the meditative experiences of the Leap-over to be disrupted. However, when the visions have not matured into the clear light, the potency of the clear light has not been perfected. If they stop, the visions of light will not develop, and that indicates that the eye of primordial wisdom has not entered the eye of wisdom76. Therefore, you should constantly strive in the practice.

When encountering that situation, some people develop their minds with meditative experiences, then travel to many regions [437] and finally succumb to adversities. Consequently, they get stuck there and do not achieve liberation. Some people encounter images of the bodies, speech, and minds of buddhas

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76 The eye of wisdom sees appearances of the absolute nature, of bindus, and vajra-strands that arise simply by attending to visions of light, whereas during meditative equipoise the eye of primordial wisdom sees the displays of the absolute nature and of bindus as they increase, stabilize, and become continuous.

which are actually apparitions of maras, gods, and demons--and due

to visions from the power [of progress in meditative experience], words of Dharma appear to them as written letters, and they are consumed by the desire to write them down. Out of lust, they consort with women, and consequently claim to be treasure-revealers. There are many such people who bring ruin to themselves and others. Due to extrasensory perception and visions in dreams, some people perceive good and bad things in themselves and others, and they leave such things as hand-prints in rock and other objects. Signs may manifest due to the apparitions of gods and demons, causing them to declare themselves to be siddhas. They then take a consort and take control of those around them. Laying the foundations for prestige and great deeds, they spend their whole lives in constant, relentless striving. Those who spend their lives tricking others with magic rituals to dispel obstacles and wander around begging and seeking wealth without satiation are possessed by maras and demons. Even if they become renunciates and gurus with great followings, they are deludedly involved in the eight mundane concerns and the negative conduct of maras.

Some people take meditative experiences to be illnesses and [438] regard conducive circumstances as demonic. When they receive medical treatment and perform rituals, they become confused by all kinds of divinations and diagnoses, and they become overwhelmed by speculations. Upon noting bad dreams and evil omens, fantasies arise even more forcefully, and those outer manifestations are apparitions of gods and demons. Any of the 404 kinds of illnesses in the body, including disorders of the wind, bile, phlegm, and combinations of them, are inner manifestations as bodily pain. If you regard them as being truly existent, you fall into error, and you will either die or deludedly fall under the influence of objective adversities.

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Some people go through various kinds of unbearable miseries and ecstatic experiences, all of them arising as secret manifestations called joys and sorrows. If you cling to them and reify them, you will stray into error, and you will not attain liberation. Due to misery and discomfort and pain in the life force in the heart, people sigh and feel like weeping, and everything they see and feel seems to be of the nature of suffering. Then they restlessly yearn to escape

somewhere where there will be no human intruders, and when they come to such a place of solitude, they yearn for companionship and moving around. [439] Overcome by desires and cravings, they find they cannot remain in solitude, and they scramble after anything that will bring them pleasure. That is falling into error, so recognize this!

Frightened by suffering, your body, speech, and mind become agitated, impelling you to become active, and that is a great mistake. Some people become depressed at the miserable pain in the life force in their hearts, and out of despair when they wander from one village to another, this seems to help. Then when they come around to their own homeland and so on, before many days have passed, uneasiness arises again just as it did before, and they wish to be on the move again. Such people wind up squandering their whole lives.

Some people's minds are filled with doubt and vacillation, doubting that they can ever come to certainty , and they waste their lives by repeatedly traveling to many lands. Some are carried away by viewing their teacher's counsel as being wrong, and they fall into false views. Others take their own meditative practice to be harmful, and they constantly feel regret and wonder what to do. They think that if they were to go to some other famous spiritual teacher, that might help. [440] Nowadays there is not a single spiritual teacher who is well versed in the nature of this path, the manner in which meditative experiences arise, and so forth. Thus, fearing that their reputation will decline,

they cannot admit they do not know and are not familiar with those things. Some of them teach things that are their own mental fabrications, then tell others that their meditation is wrong. Others say, "Your guru doesn't know how to teach, so you have been proceeding on a false path. Do this instead..." Teaching that their own level of instruction is all you need, they heap praise upon it. There are a great many who pompously declare that they can transfer their realization to others, saying, "I shall grant you my realization, our minds will merge, and you will simultaneously perfect all grounds and paths." If that were possible, the buddhas would have transferred their state of realization to sentient beings, and samsara would already be empty. Specifically, if the minds of

all the buddhas' sravaka and pratyekabuddha disciples received the buddhas' realizations by having their minds merged with the buddhas', why would they be drawn far beyond the Hinayana? [441] Do not place credence in pretentious assertions about transferring one's realization.

Some people think they have no craving for the eight mundane concerns. Others who have not developed their minds in the slightest become obsessed with various visions they experience. Those spiritually blind people never critically examine the way they wander about in delusion, then claim they have reached the state of the extinction into reality-itself and think their own delusions have vanished. Accomplished scholars scorn such attitudes and demolish them with their weapons of scriptural authority and logic. So individuals who enter this path should be careful in this regard.

Even if you succeed in other Dharma practices, you will not achieve the highest state of liberation in this very lifetime. Consequently, maras will not be jealous or angry, so they will not create obstacles for you. If you do come to the culmination of this path, you may achieve liberation in one lifetime and with one body. In this case the might of the terrifying Lord of Maras is dredged up, the

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maras are aroused to jealousy and aggression toward those advancing towards the state of spiritual awakening, and they are sent out to create obstacles. They then create problems and manifest objective apparitions to lead people astray. [442]

By practicing single-pointedly, without succumbing to such obstacles, the appearances of light increase, and as soon as you settle in meditative equipoise, all appearances become totally pervaded by light and bindus, with no intervals between them. Ordinary phenomena that appear due to looking at impure phenomena with the eyes, are seen with the eyes of the flesh. The appearances of the absolute nature, of bindus, or of [vajra-] strands arise simply by attending to the visions of light. They are derivative of the manifestation of wisdom, so they are said to be seen with the eye of wisdom. During meditative equipoise, the displays of the absolute nature and of bindus increase, stabilize, and become continuous, and

they are said to be illuminated by the eye of primordial wisdom.

The consciousness that manifests the visions of the clear light during the initial phase is called the eye of wisdom. Wherever the eye of primordial wisdom, free of dust, is directed, it illuminates whatever it sees until the visions of the absolute nature, the bindus, clear light, and divine embodiments are seen. Then due to the sharp pinnacle of primordial wisdom, free of fluctuations in the clarity of the eye of wisdom, [443] all appearance, both while in meditative equipoise and otherwise, transform into displays of light and rainbow bindus with ever increasing clarity. In the end, appearances of earth and rock vanish and dissolve into continuous, omnipresent displays of visions of light. That is the criterion for have acquainted oneself with this practice. Impurities have been transformed into the vital core, and the vital core has been transformed into the five lights, and they become manifest. That is the criterion for perfecting the power of progress in meditative experience. At this juncture, the larger bindus cover the

sky and earth, while the smaller ones variously appear as small as grains of mustard, and they appear in aggregates of five. Within the visions of the absolute nature appear the doors, roof, Dharma wheel, crowning parasol, strings of bells, and silk hangings of a palace.

Individuals who embark on such a profound, swift path, who have the fortune of combining their karma and prayers, will experience the spherical images of the first phase even at the time of death. At that time, they will expire in the nature of nirmanakayas. Finally, once the power [of their progress] has been perfected and nothing appears other than the fivefold aggregates of bindus, they will be liberated as sambhogakayas, without experiencing the intermediate state.

To present this in terms of the grounds and paths, when you come to the state called progress in meditative experience on the path of the Leap-Over, [444] that is identified with the fifth ground of the sutra path called Difficult to Practice. These meditative experiences are unbearably painful, and under their influence one experiences craving and confusion. Therefore, when one comes to this stage,

since it is very difficult to follow the path to its culmination, this is called Difficult to Practice. On the mantra path all the appearances of birth and death in samsara are cut off, and one does not perish. This is the achievement of the state of a vidyadhara who has mastery over life itself.

Then the appearances of reaching consummate awareness, in which awareness matures into its vital essence, are as follows. The upper portions of the divine embodiments appear in the midst of all the fivefold aggregates of bindus, while the lower portions of their bodies appear in forms of clouds of light. One half of their bodies appears as if it were separated. At that time, by practicing continuously, eventually entire divine embodiments will appear. The white, solitary embodiment, replete with the ornaments of a sambhogakaya is

Vairocana; the blue embodiment is Vajrasattva; the yellow embodiment is Ratnasambhava; the red embodiment is Amitabha; and the green embodiment is Amoghasiddhi. By continuing in constant practice, the embodiments eventually appear in the form of male and female deities in union; and they arise together with their entourages of the four male and female bodhisattvas. [445]

As a result of further, continuous practice, assemblies of the five buddha classes appear in spacious, vast palaces, beautifully adorned with all manner of ornaments, clothed in various silks, blazing with rays of light, and adorned with bindus and minute spheres. By familiarizing oneself with that more and more, volcanic mansions appear that are inwardly constructed of three tiers of skulls, while outwardly appearing as palaces. In their midst are mandalas of ferocious blood-drinkers. The deities and consorts are embraced in union, and single male deities appear dressed in fresh elephant skins, tied with belts of human skin, with lower garments of tiger skins, each bearing weapons. They appear in all sizes from the larger ones as vast as the sky, and the smaller ones as tiny as peas. The entire universe appears to be filled and totally pervaded with rainbow light and blazing fire. Objects as small as the head of a pin are filled and illuminated with divine embodiments with all their ornaments. That marks the perfection of the potency of reaching consummate

awareness.

The mark of one's speech at this point is that one's voice is soothing and enchanting, like songs sung by the children of kumbhandhas. [446] In addition, various words of Dharma, legends, and knowledge of linguistics, poetry, and composition naturally emerge. Appearances arise as symbols and as scriptures, and the meaning of all oral transmissions and practical instructions flows forth like the current of a river. Words of melodious songs and so on inspire others' perceptions of the world, and their minds are blessed.

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The bodily signs are that your body vividly appears as mudras of the five buddha-classes, like the appearance of a reflection in a space of limpidity and luminosity, like a mirror-image. The body appears as a variety of reflections, as light as cotton, with no sense of materiality. As an indication that bodily parasites have been released into the clear light, it becomes free of lice and nits. White hair turns dark, bright white new teeth grow in, and your muscles become youthfully strong, and wrinkles clear away. The perceptions of others shift simply by laying eyes on you, and they experience faith and reverence. With the blazing forth of the warmth of primordial wisdom, all thoughts of clothing are discarded, there is no longer any sense of being cold, and you experience continual blissful warmth. [447] Casting off all thoughts of food, you can live for months and years on the food of samadhi, the power of bliss and emptiness. In each pore of your body are displayed unimaginable kinds of abodes of sentient beings as well as buddha-fields. That indicates the achievement of mastery of miraculous emanations. With your mastery of incarnation and emanation, you manifest an inconceivable number of emanations in an unimaginable range of abodes of sentient beings, and in a single instant you guide an inconceivable number of sentient beings. You manifest an inconceivable number of emanations in an unimaginable number of buddha-fieds, where you make myriads of offerings, receive empowerments, and open up an inconceivable number of avenues of samadhi. Such transformations are displayed in your own and others' fields of experience, and you send forth and disclose unimaginable emanations and miraculous displays. Due to your pristine perception, appearances arise as displays of buddha-fields, and due

to the pristine purity of the mind-itself, the universe arises as a display of divine embodiments. Due to the pristine purity of your voice, sounds arise as wheels of Dharma. Pure

appearances pervasively arise as displays of those three pristine purities, [448] without even a speck of impure appearances.

Once the union has been mastered, the many avenues of the impure cycle of existence are purified, and can be united with the great bliss of the absolute nature. Once liberation has been mastered, simply by focusing your awareness you can bring to a state of liberation even someone who has committed the five deeds of immediate retribution. Once you reach mastery over the elements, you can transform all things into gold, silver, and so on; and phenomena are mastered such that you can transform water into fire, fire into water, and so forth. Once you have mastered the ayatanas76 of the five generic emblems, you can transform your body into the five elements, have your body take on the shape of other creatures, and manifest yourself in various emanated forms. Once you have mastered all stages of birth, dying, and aging, when you want to transcend the three worlds, you will become awakened in the absolute nature of the dharmakaya, Samantabhadra. This occasion is called awakening in the great openness above, without reliance upon any of the virtues, vices, causes, or effects of all your lifetimes. Without reliance upon the qualities of your karma or the appearances of the intermediate state, all mental states and appearance naturally awaken by themselves, like the dawn breaking in the sky, and there is no death. [449]

Reaching the state of consummate awareness on the path of the Great Perfection means that you implicitly attain what is called the eighth ground on the sutra path, and you also implicitly achieve the state of what is called a Mahamudra vidyadhara on the path of generation. Moreover, due to the

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76 These ayatanas presumably refer to the five 'signs,' (Tib. mtshan ma, Skt. nimitta) that eventually arise due to meditating on the generic emblems of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and

space. These practices are discussed in B. Alan Wallace, The Bridge of Quiescence: Experiencing Tibetan Buddhist Meditation (Chicago: Open Court, 1998) in the chapter "Quiescence in Theravada Buddhism."

inconceivable differences among people's metabolisms and faculties, there is a corresponding, inconceivable array of meditative experiences. Thus, they are not uniform and there are no definite criteria for them. The foregoing descriptions are simply metaphorical and symbolic. You must examine this with awareness and ascertain that all appearances are of the nature of meditative experience. So recognize this!

O Vidyavajra, by practicing in that way, enthusiastic, courageous individuals do not need to be concerned with such issues as the acuity of their faculties, the quality of their karma, or their age, as is the case on other paths. They are said to be of superior faculties solely due to their enthusiasm and courage. Therefore, when those who integrate Dharma with their lives, without becoming frustrated in their meditative practice, experience the outer and inner appearances of reaching consummate awareness, without confusing one for the other, [450] all phenomena will appear only as lustrous light, and no ordinary appearances will ever arise again.

Finally, like a full moon, the appearances of all embodiments and bindus gradually decrease in number. From your brain77 a white mass of light, like a billowing cloud emerges in the space in front of you. In its midst appears an aggregate of five bindus, in the center of which appears Vairocana with his consort, adorned with sambhogakaya ornaments, and surrounded by four similar deities in union. Above, below, and all around those divine embodiments, vajra strands arise in the forms of dangling lattices and half-lattices, like rosaries of clear crystals. Then blankets of light, white like the moon, emerge from the hearts of those embodiments and penetrate down into the point between your eyebrows. For seven or five days those blankets of light appear as ornamental bindus stacked up like upside-down conch bowls. Finally, they dissolve into the

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77 The Tibetan term here (dung khang) literally means "conch abode," but it refers to the brain.

point between your eyebrows, transforming your body into a mass of light. You thereby receive the immutable body-vajra empowerment.

At this point, even if you die, with no intermediate state, you will experience the central buddha-field called Ghanavyuha and achieve stability. [451] There the entire ground is composed of precious crystals. It is so vast and all-pervasively immense that it rivals the dimensions of space itself. Its surface is smooth and even, like the face of a mirror. When you step down, it gives way, and when you lift up, it rebounds. As the soles of your feet touch the surface of the ground, the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness blazes forth. Clouds of delicious aromas spread forth from hills covered with medicinal plants, and the whole ground is completely covered with brilliant lotuses of various colors. The sky is criss-crossed with lattice patterns of rainbow-colored light, and forms of rainbow canopies, parasols, victory banners, and pennants appear in it. It is surrounded all around by a great moat of water bearing the eight excellent qualities, and on its shores are pebbles of various precious substances, turquoise meadows, and golden sand. All around inside them are immense, majestic, lightly filled forests of wish-fulfilling trees. In the groves around its ponds are flocks of birds that are emanations of buddhas, white like the color of conch, yellow like gold, [452] red like coral, green like emerald, and blue like lapis-lazuli, as well as other colors such as black, tan, and variegated. Their beautiful forms are pleasing to behold, and their lovely voices proclaim words of the sublime Dharma, as they circle around the ocean and alight on the wish-fulfilling trees. In the rivers are innumerable, lovely, enchantingly beautiful goddesses emanated by daughters of the devas, nagas, gandharvas, and kinnaras, who are constantly making clouds of offerings and rendering service.

In the center of that buddha-field is a square palace with doors on each of its four sides, produced by the natural appearance of primordial wisdom. Its east

side is composed of crystal, its south side is composed of gold, its west side is composed of ruby, and its north side is composed of emerald. Its roof is of lapis lazuli, and its exterior and interior are spacious and luminous. Its whole floor inside is made of precious rainbow crystals. When the light of the sun and moon streams through its windows, the floor becomes covered with rainbow light and bindus. Jewel lattices and half-lattices hang from its walls, and parasols, victory banners, [453] pennants, and silk ribbons flutter in the wind, giving rise to words of the sublime Dharma, which are heard by herds of lovely deer. This vast, spacious palace is beautifully adorned with thresholds, Dharma wheels, and top ornaments of the sun and moon. It is exquisitely designed and is replete with all ornaments.

In its center, adorned with rainbows and a mass of light is a broad, high, jeweled throne supported by eight lions. On its lotus, sun, and moon seat is the Bhagavan Vairocana, adorned with all the sambhogakaya ornaments, of the nature of the purified aggregate of form, the embodiment of the primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality. He is surrounded by an immeasurable assembly of bodhisattvas on the tenth ground, and he is constantly turning the wheel of Dharma. Recognize the importance of occasionally bringing that buddha-field to mind even while you are still on the path.

O Vidyavajra, when you who are following this path finally go beyond that stage, red-colored light emerges from your throat [454] spreading into the sky in front of you. In the midst of that light a fivefold aggregate of bindus arises, in the center of which appears Amitabha with his consort surrounded by the four male and female bodhisattvas. Between them are red vajra-strands in patterns of lattices and half-lattices, like rubies strung together. From the hearts of those divine embodiments rays of red light appear which strike your throat in the form of a string of bindus, like inverted ruby bowls, and stack there. They

appear to dissolve into your throat for twenty-one, seven, or five days. You thereby receive the secret vajra empowerment of

unceasing speech, and you achieve confidence.

At this time, there is a discontinuity, a shift of appearances, and in an instant the entire ground, vast and spacious, is composed of rubies. When you step down, it gives way, and when you lift up, it rebounds. The whole ground is completely covered with brilliant lotuses with blossoms of various colors. The whole environment in all directions is completely surrounded by inconceivable buddha-fields. [455] There are naturally arising ambrosial ponds with jewel pebbles, golden sands, turquoise meadows, wish-fulfilling trees, ambrosial springs, rainbow canopies, and various parasols, victory banners, and pennants. Unimaginable offering goddesses are constantly making offerings and rendering service, and in the center of all this is a palace composed of rubies. Its inner walls are white on the east, yellow on the south, red on the west, and green on the north. Its roof is blue and blazes with blue light, and it is adorned with all ornaments and fine attributes. In its center, is a lotus, sun, and moon seat upon a jeweled throne supported by eight peacocks. On it sits the Bhagavan Amitabha, red in color, adorned with all the sambhogakaya ornaments and garments, of the nature of the purified aggregate of recognition, the embodiment of the primordial wisdom of discernment. He is turning the wheel of Dharma for an immeasurable congregation of bodhisattvas on the tenth ground. You are instantly transported into their midst, you stabilize there, and achieve confidence in this state. [456]

Then when you move beyond that point, blue light emerges from your heart into the space in front of you like a billowing cloud, and in its midst arises a five-fold aggregate of vast, spacious blue bindus. In their center is the principal deity Aksobhya with his consort surrounded by the four male and female

bodhisattvas. Adorned with all manner of ornaments, lattices and half- lattices of blue vajra-strands arise in the spaces between them like garlands of vairata. From the hearts of those divine embodiments blue light billows forth, penetrating down into your own heart, where bindus stack up in a column like inverted lapis-lazuli bowls. They appear to dissolve into your heart for ten days or longer. You thereby receive the wisdom-gnosis empowerment of the

undeluded enlightened mind, and you achieve confidence.

Even if there is an interruption at this time, with no intermediate state, your appearances will shift, and you will experience the southern buddha-field of Abhirati, as vast as the absolute nature itself. Its surface is smooth and limpid, like the face of a mirror. Its color is blue like lapis-lazuli and it is criss-crossed with lattice patterns of rainbow light. Verdant hills of medicinal plants are beautifully adorned with various flowers, wish-fulfilling trees, lakes of water bearing the eight fine attributes, golden sands, turquoise meadows, jewel pebbles, and unimaginable goddesses making offerings, singing praise, and rendering service.

In the midst of the sky and intervening space adorned with all manner of lovely ornaments is a square palace with four doors. Its exterior is blue in color like lapis-lazuli and blazes with light. Its interior is radiant and luminous with the colors of the five primordial wisdoms. In its center is a jeweled throne supported by eight elephants. Upon it is a lotus, sun, and moon seat on which sits the dark blue Bhagavan Aksobhya, adorned with all the sambhogakaya ornaments, of the nature of the purified aggregate of consciousness, the embodiment of mirror like primordial wisdom. One hand touches the earth, while the other is in the mudra of meditative equipoise. Around him is assembled an innumerable Sangha of bodhisattvas, who are listening to the Dharma from the Teacher while

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bowing their heads in respect. As your appearances shift to this, you will attain liberation. [458]

When you move beyond that point, yellow light emerges from your navel into the space in front of you like a billowing cloud. Immediately, the whole ground becomes luminous with yellow light like the color of gold, and all other phenomena arise as displays of yellow light. In the midst of that mass of light a five-fold aggregate of large bindus arises like a round shield, and in its center is Ratnasambhava with his consort, surrounded by the four male and female bodhisattvas. Lattices and half-lattices of blue vajra-strands arise in the spaces between them like garlands of amber. From the

hearts of those divine embodiments yellow light billows forth, penetrating down into your own navel. In that continuum of light bindus appear to stack up in a column like inverted golden bowls for five or seven days; and finally, they dissolve into you. You thereby receive the primordial wisdom vajra empowerment, free of signs and words, in which all excellent qualities are perfected.

Even if there is an interruption at this time, with no intermediate state, your appearances will shift, [459] and you will experience the precious buddha- field of Srimat, as vast as the absolute nature itself, in which the whole ground is like the color of refined gold. Its surface is smooth and even. It is filled with grassy hills of medicinal plants blanketed with various flowers, ambrosial ponds, purifying springs, and a myriad of clouds of offerings of such things as wish fulfilling trees. In its center is a palace emanated by primordial wisdom. Its exterior is like the color of precious gold, and its interior bears the colors of the four kinds of activities from the natural potency of the five primordial wisdoms. In its center is a jeweled throne supported by eight supreme horses. Upon it is a lotus, sun, and moon seat on which sits the Bhagavan Ratnasambhava, whose body is adorned with the signs and symbols of enlightenment and with all the

sambhogakaya ornaments, of the nature of the purified aggregate of feeling, the embodiment of the primordial wisdom of equality. He is surrounded by an immeasurable Sangha of bodhisattvas to whom he is constantly revealing the Dharma. With the emergence of these appearances, you will achieve liberation.

When you move beyond that point, your body appears as five lights, and from it emerges a mass of dark green light into the space in front of you. [460] In its midst appears a five-fold aggregate of five-colored bindus of light, like a rhinoceros-skin shield. In it is the principal deity Amoghasiddhi with his consort, surrounded by the four male and female bodhisattvas. The images of their bodies are limpid, they are replete with all manner of ornaments, and blaze with a magnificent mass of light. Everywhere above and below them vajra-strands appear in the forms of lattices and half-lattices, like turquoise garlands. As for the upward and downward extensions,

from the hearts of those divine embodiments green light billows forth, like the color of emerald, penetrating your genital region. In that continuum of light bindus appear to form in a column like inverted turquoise bowls for ten days or so; and when they are complete, they appear to dissolve into you. You thereby receive an empowerment that grants you mastery over the spontaneously present divine embodiments and displays of primordial wisdom.

At this time, even if your appearances shift, you will experience the buddha-field of Karmaprapurana, in which the whole ground blazes like the color of emerald. The entire environment is replete with all manner of ornaments and fine characteristics, and in its center is a palace, bearing all wonderful qualities. Its exterior is green like the color of emerald, and its interior is of the clear, luminous colors of the four kinds of activities from the natural potency of the five primordial wisdoms. [461] In its center is a jeweled throne supported by eight pheasants. Upon it is a lotus, sun, and moon seat on which sits the

Bhagavan Amoghasiddhi, whose body, green in color, is adorned with all the sambhogakaya ornaments, of the nature of the purified aggregate of compositional factors, the embodiment of the primordial wisdom of accomplishment. He is surrounded by an immeasurable assembly of bodhisattvas on the tenth ground for whom he is constantly turning the wheel of Dharma. As your appearances shift to this, you will achieve liberation.

When you receive the vajra-empowerment of spontaneous, original perfection and you go beyond the final purification of the visions of meditative experience, all the mandalas of the blood-drinking deities in the skull mansions appear to you. Rising up into the sky above, you let out a terrifying roar and appear to dance in various ways, causing all realms of the universe to tremble and shake, the great earth quakes with a great roar. Consequently, the entire animate and inanimate universe dissolves into the nature of light, and, with a wave of your hand, your own body disappears into the realm of light.

At this time, you will achieve the four great confidences of

fearlessness. [462] What are those four? Due to arriving at the ground of your own being, the dharmakaya, the nature of the original protector, the primordial buddha, even if you have a vision of buddhas filling the whole of space, you achieve the great confidence in which there is not the slightest bit of faith or reverence for them. By coming to spiritual awakening within yourself, in which you can be neither benefited or harmed by any other causes or effects, you achieve the great confidence in which there are no hopes for the ripening of effects from their causes. By coming to the ground of your own being, which is originally free of birth, cessation, and abiding, even if you are surrounded by a thousand assassins bent on murdering you, you achieve the great confidence that is devoid of even the slightest trace of fear. By experiencing the state of the originally pure, primordial protector, and coming to the state that is originally free of delusion,

you achieve the great confidence in which there is no anxiety concerning samsara or the miserable states of existence.

Then the appearances of the absolute nature, the bindus, the divine embodiments, and the buddha-fields gradually vanish like the full moon waning to the point that it disappears into the moonless sky. Finally, awareness is awakened as the ground, and you come to the nature of the dharmakaya. The fundamental root of self-grasping is destroyed, and the mind of grasping is extinguished. [463] The ray of dualistic grasping is severed, thereby extinguishing apprehended objects. Conceptualization involving dualistic appearances is extinguished, so you expand into the even, pervasive nature of the equal purity of samsara and nirvana. Your body becomes like a corpse left on a charnel ground, so no fear arises even if you are surrounded by a thousand assassins. Your speech becomes like an echo, reverberating back all the sounds of others. Like a rainbow dissolving into the sky, your mind expands into reality-itself, free of conceptual elaboration, a great, all-pervasive state beyond all dimensions.

O Vidyavajra, an individual who has extinguished the appearances of all phenomena into the absolute nature of reality-itself has far exceeded the tenth ground of the sutra path known as the Cloud of

Dharma. Such a one has implicitly reached the supreme ground of a spontaneously present vidyadhara on the mantra path. Still the most subtle of latent cognitive obscurations arise, and like the illumination from a flash of lightning in the sky, on occasion your body appears, for just the duration of a hand-wave, as a body of light in an expanse of light. Recognize that appearances and the mind occassionally separate, and speech and words of Dharma are sometimes uttered as they were previously. When this phase is completed from ten days to ten months, [464] the most subtle of cognitive obscurations vanish into the absolute nature. This perfects the

power of primordial wisdom of knowing reality as it is, and you gain mastery of the originally pure ground, the primordial dharmakaya. By perfecting the power of the primordial wisdom of seeing the full range of reality, you gain mastery over the spontaneously present divine embodiments and the displays of primordial wisdom. As the originally pure youthful vase body, you are transformed into a totally perfected buddha, and you become all-pervasive.

Those having superior faculties are liberated as a great transference embodiment, extending infinitely into the all-pervasive dharmakaya, like water merging with water, or space merging with space. Those having medium faculties attain buddhahood as a great rainbow body, like a rainbow vanishing into the sky. When the ground clear light arises, for those having inferior faculties the colors of the rainbow spread forth from the absolute nature, and their material bodies decrease in size until finally they vanish as rainbow bodies, leaving not even a trace of their aggregates behind. That is called the small rainbow body. When the ground clear light arises, the material bodies of some people decrease in size for up to seven days, then finally only the residue of their hair and nails is left behind. The dissolution of the body into minute particles is called the small transference. [465] For those of superior faculties this dissolution of the body into minute particles may occur even during the Breakthrough.

O Vidyavajra and the rest of you assembled disciples,
Listen and consider this.
These are the superior qualities

Of the spontaneously present youthful vase body.
The obscurations of ignorance are dispelled in the absolute nature;
Ascending to the dharmakaya, beyond the total-ground,

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Lustrous primordial wisdom manifests,
And it transcends lustrous clarity.
The primordial wisdom of seeing the full range of reality manifests,
And primordial wisdom transcends the mind.
Natural spiritual awakening within yourself
Surpasses traveling to buddha-fields.
Free of all the extremes of conceptual elaboration,
It transcends causality of dependent origination.
Imbued with the eight freedoms,78
It transcends all actions and their effects.
The absolute nature and primordial wisdom are equally pervasive,
Transcending mundane existence.
Perfectly complete buddhahood,
Imbued with nine surpassing greatnesses
Is praised by all the jinas."

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78 (1) The freedom of the formed observation of form, (2) the freedom of the formless observation of form, (3) the freedom of beauty, (4) the freedom of limitless space, (5) the freedom of limitless consciousness, (6) the freedom of nothingness, (7) the freedom of the peak of mundane existence, and (8) the freedom of cessation. (Tsepak Rigzin, Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology (Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986) p. 236.

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The Questions of the Entire Assembly

Then the entire assembly of disciples, including Vidyavajra, asked, "O Teacher, Bhagavan, [466] due to the barbarous nature of sentient beings in this era afflicted by the five dregs, some people, owing to their poverty, waste their lives in the pursuit of food and wealth. Some succumb to distractions and spiritual sloth and their lives are

wasted in that way. Others, while seeking to subdue their enemies and care for their families, spend their whole lives constantly in the pursuit of profit and notoriety. Some people get caught up in activities pertaining to the eight mundane concerns and fall under the spell of the bounties of mundane existence. Others are overcome by maras and obstacles, so their meditations veer off into ordinary mental states. Due to the paucity of conducive circumstances and the abundance of unfavorable circumstances, there are very few who reach the state of liberation. If they are not liberated, they must proceed into the intermediate state, so may the Teacher precisely explain the essentials of practice in that state!"

The Teacher replied, "O Vidyavajra and you other assembled disciples, listen! The essential nature of that which is called the intermediate state is simply this ordinary, limpid, clear, fresh, unstructured, and uncontaminated consciousness of the present. Why? [467] Due to failing to realize this, one is made to wander endlessly in samsara, and due to realizing it, one is brought to nirvana. This very consciousness is liberated in the three times, so it does not become awakened, as it is not liberated, it does not wander in the cycle of existence. Rather, it remains in an in ethically neutral transitional process, and that is the defining characteristic of sentient beings.

The emergence of sentient beings out of ignorance of the ground is like the sun. The emergence of conceptual mental processes from the mind is like the

rays of the sun. The emergence of appearances from mental processes is like the light of the sun. The manifestation of the limpid and clear essential nature of the mind is just like the eyes. As for the etymology of the mind, this term refers to the mentation that takes place due to appearances. Thus, the ground of the mind naturally arises as the essential nature of the transitional processes.

As for the etymology of transitional process, this term refers to the arising of unstable, delusive, dream-like appearances in the interval after a prior state of existence and before a later state of existence occurs. This is the classification of the transitional processes:

1. the grasping transitional process of living
2. the contemplative transitional process of meditative stabilization
3. the delusive transitional process of dreams
4. the gradual transitional process of dying
5. the inconceivable transitional process of reality-itself [468]
6. the karmic transitional process of becoming

First, the transitional process of living is like a little' bird on a treetop, for you cannot remain for long before having to proceed to another world. Having pondered the nature of this process, the attitude of preparing to remain in this world for a long time regresses. Then, like a bee in pursuit of nectar, you first clear out mistaken notions by means of hearing and pondering the Dharma; and when you are practicing, you must cut off uncertainties and hesitation as if you were a swallow entering its nest. Among birds, the swallow is especially skilled at inspection. When it first builds its nest, it carefully observes for a long time whether or not there might be disturbance or harm from other creatures; then after this is determined, it builds its nest. Once its nest is built, from then on it

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goes straight to its nest like an arrow, without any uncertainty or hesitation.

Likewise, by devoting yourself to a qualified master and by acquiring broad learning and deep understanding, you should be able to proceed to the essential points of the path by your own power, without error. First gain sound understanding of the view, meditation, experiential realizations, and the nature of the grounds and paths, and comprehend them through your own experience. Eventually [469] you will never be separated from the awareness that the appearances of this life are like dreams and illusions; and like someone shopping in a market, you will unsatiatingly practice with zeal and great courage. Like a traveler from a distant land who has achieved his great goal and when setting out on the road does not lose it to enemies or thieves, do not succumb to activities involving the eight mundane concerns, such as the great obstacles of entertainment, distractions, subduing your enemies, and caring for your loved ones. Adhering to that crucial point is the sublime

quintessence for all Dharma practitioners, so be aware of it!

By practicing in that way, those of superior faculties attain spiritual awakening as a great transference embodiment of the rainbow body, without reliance upon death or their full life span. Those of medium faculties are liberated during the dying process, with no intermediate state, in the nature of reality-itself. Those of inferior faculties merge the mother and child clear light in the intermediate state and attain liberation.

It is important that you occasionally train in the path of transference in the following way:

AH. Imagine a white syllable A on the crown of your head.
Immeasurable masses of light emanate from it:
In the actual, self-appearing, great, buddha-field of Akanista,

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Vast as the absolute nature of reality, [470]
Beautifully arranged and adorned, is a great palace.
From an A in its center appears the original ground-dharmakaya [Samantabhadra],
Dark blue, like a lapis-lazuli mountain,
Naked and unadorned, he sits cross-legged upon a lotus and moon.
His hands are in the mudra of meditative equipoise, and he blazes with the light of the signs and symbols of enlightenment.
The displays of myriads of buddha-fields are all present in this embodiment.
Like a dream instantly dissolving into the absolute nature,
Your appearances and mental states indivisibly, of one taste,
Are transferred to the absolute nature of the great bliss of Akanista.

With "A," the animate and inanimate world of the three realms dissolves into that buddha-field, becoming indivisible with it. Uttering "A," recognize this and bring it to mind. Uttering " A," imagine that you achieve great confidence.

To the east imagine the vast and spacious buddha-field of Abhirati filling the entire sky and intervening appearances, white and luminous like a full moon, the color of conch. To the south imagine the vast and spacious buddha-field of Srimat blazing throughout the entire sky, intervening appearances, and the earth, like the color of gold. To the west imagine the vast and spacious buddha- field of Sukhavati, red like the color of ruby. To the north imagine the buddha field of Karmaprapurana, like the color of emerald, with dimensions equal to the absolute nature of reality. [471]

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Imagine yourself as a bodhisattva imbued with the power and might of primordial wisdom. Starting from the east, imagine that you proceed to those buddha-fields like an arrow shot by a powerful archer, and imagine that you thrice circumambulate the tathagatas who are the lords of the buddha-classes. You make prostrations and

immeasurable offerings, and you receive empowerments, hear practical instructions, and receive oral transmissions and blessings. Imagine that you then return to the buddha-field of Ghanavyuha in the center, where the dharmakaya, the buddha of the original ground, is present in the space in front of you. Those are the practical instructions called transferring one's own appearance to a buddha-field and entering therein. In the intermediate state when you recognize that you have died, simply by bringing this to mind, the appearances of the intermediate state will shift to a buddha-field, and you will achieve liberation.

Second, the transitional process of meditative stabilization is like the situation of an exhausted person taking a rest. Why? For lifetimes during the beginningless cycle of existence, like rabid stray dogs, sentient beings wander aimlessly throughout the states of existence of the three realms, [472] without a moment's rest. Here is a way to recognize that situation and bring forth a sense of disillusionment and disgust. Examine the delusive causes and conditions in the past, and recognize how they established a foundation of ignorance, and how you then became possessed by the great demon of dualistic grasping, which crazed you and left you with no self-mastery or stability. Then take control of your vital energies and mind and establish confidence on the basis of firm mindfulness and introspection. Let your awareness hold its own ground, and strive in the practice of meditation. Just that provides the rest from delusion on the basis of meditative stabilization.

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At this point, you are like someone suffering from hunger and thirst who comes upon food and drink and unsatiatingly partakes of them until he is full. Likewise, people of superior, middling, and inferior faculties may be likened to a calf. First it lives on milk; when it has grown up somewhat, it lives on both grass and milk; and finally it forsakes milk and lives on grass alone. In a similar progression, first you stop and subdue the compulsive ideation of your vital energies and mind, and release and let thoughts manifest. The phase of alternatingly concentrating and releasing is like the period when the calf lives on milk. If it stayed in that phase [473] and did not come upon grass, it would surely die of starvation. Likewise, if you do not encounter the manifest path, you will not transcend the lower states

of mundane existence, and you will continue wandering there.

Once consciousness has manifested and you practice single-pointedly, if you remain in that state and do not eventually encounter all-pervasive awareness, the originally pure, ground-awareness itself, the Great Perfection free of extremes, you will not transcend the three realms of mundane existence, and you will be cast into the ocean of the miseries of samsara as you were before. This is analogous to the time when the calf needs both grass and milk and dies of starvation if it does not get either one.

Once you have ascertained samsara and nirvana as great emptiness, identified dharmakaya awareness, until you reach the state of omniscient, perfect awakening, disengage from all manner of activities. Practicing by way of naturally settled conduct, free of activity, is like the calf living on grass alone, without reliance upon milk. If you remain at the point where you have merely identified awareness, you will be like someone who does not eat or satisfy his hunger and thirst even though he has food. Such a person will surely die. Likewise, if your practice does not encompass death, you will be involved in

hopes and fears concerning all good and bad things of the present. [474] If this happens, you will be deluded throughout the endless cycle of existence by dualistic appearances of yourself and others and by thoughts of clinging to hopes and fears concerning the good and the bad. So recognize this! Therefore, your must bear in mind the utmost importance of practicing with zeal and great courage until the state of liberation and omniscience has manifested. Both living and meditative stabilization are called transitional processes, for both take transitional states of consciousness as their basis.

Third, the delusive transitional process of dreams appears in the following way. Some people may say that daytime appearances arise as dream appearances. However, from the primordial beginning of time, the face of the ground absolute nature, free of the eight extremes of conceptual elaboration, and the displays of the divine embodiments and primordial wisdoms, has been veiled by ignorance. Then one is possessed by the intoxicated demon of the

three realms of samsara, the great fiend of the karmic energies, which allows the inner mind of grasping to act as the primary cause, and outer grasped objects to act as contributing conditions. Daytime appearances then emerge due to the reification of the appearances of the five senses; and once they have dissolved into the absolute nature, dream appearances emerge. The appearances of this life and all that follows indicate the fallacy of the notion that daytime appearances are true and dream appearances are false. [475] As for the causes and conditions of both daytime appearances and dream appearances, that which serves as the cause is the dormant consciousness that perceives identityless, dependently related events as bearing their own identities. That which has the capacity to give rise to limpid, clear objects serves as the contributing condition. Due to the confluence of those causes and conditions, a nondual, continuous collection brings forth delusive appearances that do not actually exist.

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Taking the comprehension of that as your basis, train in regarding all appearances as dreams, then identify dream appearances themselves. By so doing, if you achieve confidence by growing accustomed to awareness holding its own ground, the appearances of the intermediate state will be cut off, and you will gain mastery over the great bounty of reality-itself.

Fourth, that which is called the transitional process of dying is like falling into the hands of an evil assassin, and it refers to the period from the time you are struck by a deadly disease until your breath ceases. First of all, when you are struck by an illness, carefully check to see whether or not the vapor [from your feces] has stopped, check your vision by placing your fist on your forehead, see whether the form of your space-vitality has vanished79, like the sun descending behind a mountain peak, and note whether the hum in your ears has disappeared. [476] Then apply yourself to ritual practices and so on for the sake of accumulating merit.

If that does not help, take a good friend who has not broken his samayas with you to a solitary place free of other people and disturbing influences. At your heart visualize a large white syllable A, with twenty- one white A's stacked on top of it. Recite "A"

twenty-one times, and as you do so, imagine them merging upwards, until, with the sound of "PHAT," the topmost white A merges into the great bliss of Akanista, the space of the Buddha Samantabhadra of the original ground. As a result of then resting in this all-pervasiveness, vapor may rise from your Brahma. aperture or your breath may stop, and these are signs of achieving liberation in space.

If you cannot achieve transference by that means, lie down in the lion's posture, direct your attention to your eyes, and steadily focus your eyes on the

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79 With this practice you place your fist on your forehead, and if you can see right through it, with no interval between the left and right sides of your vision, then "the form of your space- vitality" has vanished.

intervening space in front of you. Then imagine your body, mind, and all appearances simultaneously fading into the form of a five-colored mass of light. By taking this appearance of light as your path and settling there in meditative equipoise, your breath may come to a stop and you may achieve liberation with no intermediate state.

Alternatively, have your companion say three times in a loud voice, 'O you child of good breeding, in the space one cubit above the top of your head sits the Bhagavan, the original ground-dharmakaya, Samantabhadra, the buddha who dwells in neither of the extremes of mundane existence or nirvana, whose body is blue in color, naked, and adorned with the signs and symbols of enlightenment. Merge your consciousness with the nonconceptual, primordial wisdom of his mind. Each time this is said, have your companion utter the sound "HI KA" three times. By so doing, if your eyes roll upwards, that's the measure of success.

If you do not die as a result of that, when your breath goes out and the appearances of external objects fade away, have your companion stick a hollow bamboo or a tube of paper into your ear and say into it three times, 'O you child of good breeding, when the white and red phases of dissolution arise for you, that is the reversal of the cycle of

existence. Merge with the ground absolute nature, free of conceptual elaboration, the originally pure, primordial ground; and transfer there!' He should also utter the sound "PHAT" three times.

If your breath does not cease by that means either, have your companion say, "Child of good breeding, dissolve your consciousness into a white syllable A and, like an arrow shot by a powerful archer, transfer it from your Brahma aperture to the realm of pristine space." That counsel will bring greater clarity to the dying process, and it is like a message sent by a king. [478]

If you derive no benefit in those ways either from the transference by your own power or by the assistance of someone else, the sign of the pervasive wind escaping is the deterioration of the complexion and radiance of your body; the sign of the fire-accompanying wind escaping is the loss of all bodily warmth in the limbs and so on so that you become as cold as a stone; the sign of the descending wind escaping is the outflow of all the vital essences of the body; and the signs of the ascending wind escaping are the expulsion of the breath, food and drink that have been ingested through the mouth emerging from the nose, and drooling of saliva and mucus. Due to interference between the vital energies of the channels and elements and the blood, various delusive appearances arise. Eventually the blood converges in the life force channel, the vital energies are expelled, and awareness collapses into the center of the heart. Now you have come to what is called the separation of the vital energies and the mind.

Up until that point, consciousness gradually dissolves into appearances, giving rise to a red vision that is like a flash of lightning. The sign that the [red] vision is dissolving into the [red] emergence is the appearance of a red vision like the rising sun. [479] After that, the sign that the [red] emergence is dissolving into the [dark] attainment is a vision of darkness that is like twilight. When you fall unconscious in that state, you have died.

At these times recognizing these stages of dissolution, as if you were a lovely woman gazing at herself in a mirror, is of great importance. Those of superior faculties follow the instructions on entering into

the clear light. Those of middling faculties reverse the impure appearances and mental states of samsara back into displays of the clear light, reality-itself. By recognizing the stages of dissolution, it is most important that even those of inferior faculties establish confidence in the immediate clear light.

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Due to the influence of people's faculties, some remain unconscious in that state for six hours, for twelve hours, for one full day, or for two or three days. However long they stay there, that is the phase when one dissolves into the authentic, immediate total-ground. Following that is so-called the dissolution of the [dark] attainment into the clear light. As an analogy, just as the space inside a jar is united with the space outside, without even a speck of any appearance of a self, a limpid, clear expanse arises like all-pervasive space, free of contamination, like dawn breaking in the sky. [480] At this time, people who are already very familiar with ground-awareness by means of the Breakthrough and have gained confidence in this will recognize the junction of the awareness in which they have previously trained--which is like a familiar person--and the later immediate clear light. There they must hold their own ground, like a king sitting upon his throne.

For those who have taken the Breakthrough as their path, without knowing the Leap-over or gaining success in its practice, this occasion is a critical juncture, like conducting heart surgery.80 Once they have recognized awareness, if they can establish confidence, that is called liberation in the clear light of the dharmakaya during the dying process, and that is like surviving by removing fluid from the heart. If they do not recognize awareness or establish confidence, they will endlessly wander in the delusive cycle of existence, and that is like perforating the heart with a golden tube, in which case death is certain. The number of days one remains in meditative stabilization in the clear light of the dying process corresponds to the stability and duration of one's present practice. Those who have achieved stability lasting an entire day and night may achieve stability lasting seven human days; but for those who have not entered the path

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90 Tib. snying la gser thur 'dren pa. This refers to the ancient Tibetan medical practice of inserting a golden tube into the heart to withdraw excess fluid from it.

the clear light will not appear longer than the time it takes to eat a bowl of food. [481]

Fifth, as for the transitional process of reality-itself, for those who see the entrance to the clear light great Leap-over and then apply themselves to the practice sporadically, knowledge arises simply by a self-appearance called dissolution into the spontaneously present clear light. All appearing objects wherever they look are completely filled and pervaded by a great radiance of light, like brocade filled with rainbows. That is like a sprout of rice. Thereafter, like the emergence of a bundle of rice, numerous bindus appear, ranging in size to those as expansive as the sky to those as small as fish eyes, and they pervade and fill everything. Like the ripening of a bundle of rice, first in the midst of one large bindu the principle deities Vairocana and his consort appear surrounded by four male and female bodhisattvas. From the hearts of those deities white light spreads forth, too brilliant to look at, penetrating the crown of one's head. Upon it, bindus appear to stack up like hollow conch bowls. That is called the hollow path of Vairocana. Simultaneously with that appears the path of animals, [482] which is blue and faintly luminous.

When you come to this point, the child-like clear light in which you have trained previously and the subsequently arising mother-like luminosity converge. As a result, like a child unhesitatingly crawling onto its mother's lap, when your consciousness enters into the clear light, you will achieve liberation in the great bliss of union.

If you are not liberated at that point due to failing to recognize the clear light, all appearances transform into displays of red light. In the midst of that light the principle deity Amitabha with his consort, surrounded by four male and female bodhisattvas, appears inside a bindu that reaches from the earth to the sky. From the hearts of those

divine embodiments red light spreads forth,

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penetrating your throat, in which bindus become stacked up like hollow ruby bowls. Simultaneously, a pale red pathway of pretas, devoid of any luster, arises. At this time, for those who recognize their appearances, this merges and transforms into divine embodiments and brilliant light, and if they achieve confidence without being distracted elsewhere, they will achieve liberation.

If you are not liberated due to failing to recognize that, all appearances become completely veiled and pervaded by a dark blue light, [483] in the midst of which appears the principle deity Aksobhya with his consort, surrounded by the four male and four female bodhisattvas. He is adorned with the signs and symbols of enlightenment and with the garments of a sambhogakaya. From their hearts dark blue light spreads forth, too brilliant to look at, penetrating your heart, in which bindus become stacked up like hollow lapis-lazuli bowls. Simultaneously, beneath that arises a black-light pathway of hell beings, devoid of any luster. At this time as well, if your consciousness merges into the absolute nature of the divine embodiments and you hold your own ground with confidence, you will achieve liberation in the buddha-field of Abhirati.

If you are not liberated at that point, all appearances transform and emerge into displays of yellow light, in the midst of which appears a vast, expansive yellow bindu, like a rhinoceros-skin shield. Inside it appears a variegated lotus, sun, and moon seat, on which sits the Bhagavan Ratnasambhava, his body the color of refined gold, adorned with sambhogakaya garments. Embracing his consort, their glory and aura is too brilliant to look at. On their right is the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, on their left is the Bodhisattva Akasagarbha, [484] in front of them is the Bodhisattvi Mamalema, and behind them is the Bodhisattvi Dhuspe, blazing with light like refined gold shining in the sunlight. From the hearts of those divine embodiments yellow light spreads forth, penetrating your navel, where amber bindus stack up like hollow amber

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bowls. Simultaneously, beneath them arises the white pathway of the

devas, devoid of brilliance. If you recognize Ratnasambhava in this hollow path and merge your awareness with him, you will gain mastery over the southern buddha-field of Srimat and you will achieve liberation. Those are called the paths of union with the four primordial wisdoms. In the first instant of this very secret, unsurpassed, swift path there is recognition; in the second, you achieve confidence; and in the third you achieve liberation.

You may not be able to gaze at the luminous path of purity, in which case your attention cannot be placed there; but by merging with the four impure paths and focusing on them, you will take birth in those states of existence. Until you perfect the power of progress in meditative experience, the hollow path of Amoghasiddhi will not appear, and from the time that the power of progress in meditative experience has been perfected, [485] up until the phase of reaching consummate awareness, buddhahood will be achieved without an intermediate state, and those visions will not appear.

Then the appearances of the embodiments and bindus decrease, and from your brain all the mandalas of the displays of the blood-drinkers disperse and spread out up into the sky, like sparks from a fire. From each one of them countless others are emanated, pervading and filling all the realms of the universe. Rays of light beam forth from their eyes like the light from a hundred thousand suns and moons. With their mouths gaping open, and their teeth bared like the moon, their moustaches aflame, and lightning flashing from their eyebrows, they are replete with charnel ground garments. In the midst of flames like the conflagration at the end of the eon, they hold aloft various weapons and bellow forth HUM PHAT and the words "Strike! Kill" like the simultaneous roaring of a thousand peals of thunder. Various headed creatures brandish weapons and dance around. When seeing these appearances of

terrifying embodiments and hearing their ferocious roars, the assemblies of Yama, the Lord of Death, are intimidated and terrified. If you recognize them all as direct appearances of the emanated peaceful and wrathful mandalas of the vajra-city of your aggregates,81 [486] and have the power to fuse with them nondually, you will achieve liberation in the volcanic charnel ground

of Akanista.

For those who have succeeded in the training and have become acquainted with the path of the great clear light Leap-over, all those peaceful and wrathful appearances of lights and bindus will appear over a period of seven weeks of days of meditative stabilization*; and they will have time to gain recognition and liberation by the power of that sustained experience. For those who have not seen the entrance to the path of the clear light Great Perfection, or those who have seen it but have not practiced or succeeded in the training due to an absence of confident recognition, and due to spiritual sloth, distraction, and succumbing to amusements, those lights and bindus will not appear longer than the duration of an eclipse. Thus, it goes without saying that they will not have time to recognize them or gain liberation.

When all such peaceful and wrathful appearances vanish into the absolute nature, you will recall all the types of Dharma you have heard in the past, but they are forgotten as soon as they are remembered. Moreover, this is a phase when innumerable types of Dharma that you have never before heard or understood appear, and as soon as they do so, they are forgotten. For the most part, people experience the vision of the clear light for a short time, and they remain in this state only briefly. [487] As soon as they remember their guru, for those with faith, reverence, and great adoration for their spiritual mentors, the self-appearing Teacher of such disciples may appear as their guru and show them the way to liberation; and they may indeed attain liberation.

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81 This refers to your own body, which is the locus of the three vajras of the body, speech, and mind.

Those who have broken their samayas with respect to their vajra guru or have committed deeds of immediate retribution descend into a fathomless abyss. After their outer breath has ceased and before their inner breath has stopped, with no demarcation between life and death, they fall to vajra hell with no intermediate state. Those who have not broken their samayas with respect to their guru or vajra

siblings and who have well succeeded in their practice of the Breakthrough and the Leap-over ascend into a fathomless expanse. After their outer breath has ceased and before their inner breath has stopped, with no demarcation between life and death, they are naturally liberated within themselves, with no intermediate state. Like space dissolving into space, they become spiritually awakened in the original ground-dharmakaya.

Everyone else definitely experiences the following appearances of the intermediate state. Nowadays, amongst the tantras, oral transmissions, and practical instructions, it is especially important to examine, investigate, and properly understand the teachings on the way the intermediate state arises and then to apply them to your own experience. So comprehend this! After the inconceivable transitional process of reality-itself is completed, this is the way you go astray in the sixth, karmic transitional process of becoming. [488] Moved by karmic energies, your consciousness is unable to go to the absolute nature of reality, the vajra seat,82 or your [future] mother's womb. But apart from those two, it moves freely and unimpededly through all concrete, material things such as earth, stone, mountains, boulders, and trees. It is complete with a self-appearing, empty image just like your previous physical form, and all your senses are present. Thus, objects appear just as they are, and you have mastery of various kinds of paranormal abilities. You are endowed with divine vision by

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82 In this context, the "vajra seat" refers to buddhahood or to any of the buddha-fields, to which the being in this transitional process of becoming does not have access. In addition, until the transitional process has run its course, such a being also cannot go to this or her future mother's womb.

which you can see various beings similar to yourself, and you are aware of the thoughts of attachment and anger in the minds of others. At times, when you are in the presence of humans, you hear their conversations, but they neither hear nor respond to your responses. Thinking that they are all mad at you, you may feel anger

yourself. Even when you are with your spouse, he or she gives you no food. Noting that you cast no shadow in the sunlight and no reflection of you appears in a mirror, and that you leave no tracks in sand, soft earth, or fluid and so on, you feel perplexed and come to know that you have died. Then you experience immeasurable terror and misery. [489] When you go for refuge to those making devotions to the guru, you see that they are conducting the rituals improperly, that they have no no practice of the stage of generation or completion, and that they have many other faults such as breaking their samayas and vows. Thinking that you have been duped by these people and that you will be cast into a miserable state of existence, false views arise. Ardently yearning to adopt a body quickly, you rove about in all directions, looking for an entrance to a womb. But during the intermediate state, until its time has run its course, you do not see or find an entrance to a womb.

After each period of seven days has passed, the appearances of the prior conditions for your death arise, producing immense suffering. You hear four terrifying sounds: the sound of a thousand mountains crumbling to pieces, the sound of a raging ocean, the sound of a blazing bonfire, and the roaring sound of the wind. White, red, and black abysses appear, which are natural forms of the three poisons, and you experience unbearable horror that you will fall into them. Unbearable, delusive appearances arise such as being chased by soldiers and assassins, a great mountain tumbling down upon you, and a violent storm bearing down upon you. At times you appear in the form of your previous body, and at times you appear in the form of your next body.

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A sign that you will be reborn in either a deva or human state is that your head turns upward; [490] a sign that you will be reborn either as an asura or an animal is that you look horizontally; and a sign that you will be reborn as a hell being or a preta is that you look downwards. A sign that you will be reborn in hell is the appearance of a stump-like pillar of black light; for a preta rebirth it is an appearance like dangling black wool; for an animal rebirth it is an appearance like an ocean of blood; for a human rebirth it is an appearance of white light; for an asura rebirth it is an appearance of green light; and for a deva rebirth it is a white light one fathom long.

As for your stream of consciousness, for rebirth in a formless realm you take great delight in vacuity; for rebirth in a form realm you crave clarity; for rebirth as a deva of the desire realm you crave bliss; for human rebirth you crave objects; for rebirth as an asura you desire snow and rain; for rebirth as an animal you yearn for dark light; for rebirth as a preta you are drawn to pale red light; and for rebirth in hell you are attracted to tongues of fire. All those objects appear to you to be beautiful and attractive, and you feel an irresistible attraction to them.

If you become acquainted with these points starting right now and take them to heart, you may recognize these signs in the present, experience the dharmakaya, the awareness that is present as the ground, establish confidence in that, and the ground clear light, the originally pure dharmakaya, will appear again. That is like repairing a broken irrigation channel, and you will thereby achieve liberation. [491]

Alternatively, you may bring to mind the buddha-field, palace, and chosen deity on which you have meditated in the past, and if you hold your ground in that, your appearances will shift to them, and you will be liberated. Moreover, if you have manifested a pristine buddha-field, which brings enormous relief, and have established habitual propensities in your mind for that, upon recalling them

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and accurately bringing them to mind, your appearances will shift to them, and you will achieve stability.Those who lack such habitual propensities through practice may see a beautiful mass of fire, and as soon as they come into its midst, visions of hell emerge and they suffer. By going into a lovely cave, preta appearances arise; by entering a river or a swamp, animal appearances emerge; by going into a fine rain or a fierce blizzard, asura appearances arise; and due to the appearances of such things as a garden and a palace, you enter rebirth as a deva.

As for grasping onto a human environment, the eastern world sector of Videha appears in the form of a fish; Godaniya appears in the form of a swan; Uttarakuru appears in the form of a crane; and Jambudvipa appears in the form of a man and a woman in sexual

union. At this time, if you block the entrance to the womb and bring to mind the preceding points, you may still achieve liberation. [492]

Alternatively, if you do enter a womb, in the presence of a man and woman in sexual union who are of a fine heritage and who dwell in the vicinity of an excellent spiritual friend, where Dharma is flourishing in Jambudvipa, which is the foremost of all the world sectors, with attraction for your mother and aversion for your father, you may unhesitatingly enter her womb by way of her anus. At that time, if you can imagine yourself in the form of your spiritual mentor or your chosen deity and pray to be of great service to the world, you will certainly achieve a precious human rebirth endowed with the eighteen types of leisure and endowment. It is important to know that if you enter the womb with attraction for your father and aversion for your mother, you will be reborn as a girl.

Nowadays to practice the instructions for purifying the intermediate state, earnestly consider, "Oh no! I have died. This appearance is the appearance of the

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intermediate state." Then rest for awhile in a state of recognizing samsara and nirvana as great emptiness. Then think, "I have really died. This is the transitional process of becoming. Now I must engage in a method for escaping from this miserable dungeon of samsara." Then bring to mind the buddha-field of Abhirati to the east, and imagine white light, like a mass of clouds, illuminating the sky to the further reaches to the east. [493] That buddha-field is vast and spacious, unimaginably immense. Its surface is smooth, even, limpid, and clear like the surface of a mirror. It is filled and blanketed with lotus blossoms of different colors. When you press down upon it, it gives way, and when you lift up, it rebounds. The four cardinal directions and eight intermediate directions are adorned with wish-fulfilling trees. Springs of purifying ambrosia flow forth. Jewel pebbles, turquoise meadows, and gold sand surround lakes and ponds of ambrosia bearing the eight excellent qualities. In the midst of checkered patterns of rainbows, many goddesses bring forth offering clouds of sensual delights. Flocks of many exquisite emanated birds with lovely voices sing melodies of Dharma. In the

sky appear forms such as canopies, parasols, and silk pennants formed from rainbows.

Imagine that in the center of this buddha-field is a palace created from the brilliant light of primordial wisdom. Vast and spacious, it is resplendent with white, yellow, red, green, and blue hues. [494] It is well designed and is replete with all manner of lovely decorations and attributes. In its center is a jeweled throne supported by eight elephants, on which is a lotus, sun, and moon seat. On it sits the Bhagavan Vajrasattva, his body white in color, adorned with the signs and symbols of enlightenment and with all the attire of a sambhogakaya. This supreme, illusory embodiment of primordial wisdom is surrounded by an inconceivable assembly of bodhisattvas.

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Then imagine that you ascend to that buddha-field, like an arrow shot by a powerful archer, and you circumambulate that palace three times. You confess your sins and nonvirtues. Upon your request, the gatekeeper opens the door, you enter the palace, and pay homage, make offerings, confess your sins, and pray to the Tathagata. The Tathagata beholds you with great mercy and blesses you, makes a prophecy concerning you, grants you empowerments, and you sit down among those to whom he is teaching the Dharma.

If you succeed in the practice of transforming your appearances, during the transitional process of becoming, [495] as soon as you recognize that you have died, by the power of the habitual propensities in which you have trained previously, with the aspiration to be liberated from samsara, you may recall that buddha-field and accurately bring it to mind. Then by focusing your desire to go there, you will have the fortune to arrive there, like an arrow shot by a strong archer; and you will achieve stability in that buddha-field.

Occasionally bring to mind the buddha-field of Srimat to the south, in which the whole sky and earth blazes like the color of gold. In its center is the Bhagavan Ratnasambhava, the color of body like refined gold. He is surrounded by an assembly of viras and yoginis of the jewel family, and you imagine yourself arriving there and

sitting before him as you did before. From time to time, bring to mind the ruby-like buddha-field of Sukhavati to the west, in the center of which is red Amitabha, surrounded by an assembly of viras and yoginis of the lotus family. Imagine that you have arrived in their presence. Occasionally bring to mind the buddha-field of Karmaprapurana to the north, which is like the color of emerald. In its center is the Bhagavan Amoghasiddhi, adorned with the attire of a sambhogakaya, and surrounded by an assembly of viras and yoginis of the karma family. [496] Imagine that you perceive the layout of the buddha-field as if you were seeing it directly with your eyes, then imagine that you go there

like an arrow shot by a powerful archer. Imagine being there as if you were a criminal who has escaped from prison and has arrived home, and bow in homage, pray, and so on to the Tathagata as before.

At times, imagine all appearances as the buddha-field of your chosen deity. For example, as if you were seeing with your eyes, imagine the regions to the east, south, west, and north from the center of a vast region. To the east imagine the buddha-field of Abhirati, adorned with white flowers and with white light reaching up into the heavens; to the south imagine the buddha-field of Srimat, adorned with yellow flowers and with yellow light reaching up into the heavens; to the west imagine the buddha-field of Sukhavati, adorned with red flowers and with red light reaching up into the heavens; and to the north imagine the buddha-field of Karmaprapurana, adorned with green flowers, and with green light reaching up into the heavens. Bringing them to mind as if you were seeing them with your own eyes, bring forth confidence in that state and dwell in that.

The practice of occasionally imagining the appearances of going to those buddha-fields, as if you were an arrow shot by a powerful archer and arriving there [497], establishes a potency in your mind-stream that provides enormous relief in the intermediate state. Therefore, recognize the supreme importance of succeeding in the practice of these instructions and gaining stability in your mind-stream with respect to this training.

At the time of the transitional process of reality-itself, either your spiritual mentor or a spiritual friend whose samayas are not broken should say, "O you child of good breeding!" calling out your name three times, "By dissolving the impure entrances of samsara into pure reality-itself, like the autumn sky free of the three contaminating conditions, an all-pervasive, uncontaminated, limpid radiance, devoid of direction or limits, will arise. That is your original, primordial ground, your originally pure, essential nature. So recognize it! Bring forth

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confidence in your own consciousness! With confidence, hold your own ground! You will then become enlightened in the unmistaken absolute nature of the dharmakaya, the mind of Samantabhadra." That should be said three times, specifically, three times every day for three days.

From the third to the seventh day, that person should say, "O you child of good breeding, listen well and bear this in mind! The appearances of light, light rays, [498] bindus, and peaceful and wrathful divine embodiments that arise are said to dissolve into originally pure, spontaneous presence. The sediments of the elements emerge as the vital core, causing the vital core of the five lights to ripen as the vital essence. The vital essence of the bindus of that come to fruition as divine embodiments. Without letting your consciousness be distracted elsewhere, merge with the light, like a child crawling on its mother's lap. Merge your mind with the divine embodiments and the bindus! Your own appearances are manifesting in the nature of the clear light great bliss, so recognize this! Merge there, transfer there, and establish confidence! Hold your own ground on the basis of that confidence, and without being distracted to anything else, if you undeludedly hold your own ground, you will become enlightened as a sambhogakaya in the intermediate state. Do not be afraid of your own appearances as the wrathful mandala. Do not be terrified of your own sounds that appear to you. Do not fear the variously appearing rays, but remain firm in the recognition of the ground-awareness as displays of the totality of samsara and nirvana; and be infinitely pervasive."

Then for six weeks place an image of the dead person in front of

you. Nine times imagine hooking the consciousness of the dead person into that image, then imagine placing it into a pocket of light. Then say, "O you child of good breeding, listen without distraction! You have certainly died, [499] so recognize this! In the transitional process of becoming, any place you imagine,

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you will instantly arrive there. Inconceivable, terrifying, delusive appearances will arise, and that is called the karmic transitional process of becoming. You have arrived at the border between samsara and nirvana, so be disillusioned and repelled by this cycle of existence, which is of the nature of suffering, without even a moment of true happiness. These worlds of the six types of existence of devas, humans, and so forth are delusive appearances, like illusions and the realm of dreams; so forcefully cut off craving and attachment. A world to the east of here called Abhirati is a buddha-field graced with immeasurable joys and excellent qualities. There the Bhagavan named Vajrasattva is revealing the Dharma and bringing blessings to an immeasurable assembly of bodhisattvas. Bring that to mind! You have no material aggregate of flesh and blood, so let your mental body of empty form go to that buddha-field as if it were an arrow shot by a powerful archer." By uttering PHAT, that person should imagine the dead one going there like a shooting star. [500]. Uttering PHAT again, imagine the dead person arriving at the buddha-field. Uttering PHAT again, imagine that person recognizing the appearances of the buddha-field, achieving confidence, perfecting the power in that, and achieving stability.

Then leading the dead person as you did before, say, "To the south of here is a buddha-field called Srimat, which is endowed with superb joys and excellent qualities. There the Bhagavan named Ratnasambhava is revealing the Dharma and bringing blessings to an immeasurable assembly of bodhisattvas" and so on. Then say, "Innumerable yojanas to the west of here is the immeasurable blissful buddha-field called Sukhavati, in which the Bhagavan named Amitabha of immeasurable light is revealing the Dharma" and so forth. Then say, "In a world to the north, countless yojanas from here is a buddha-field called Karmaprapurana, which is replete with displays of divine embodiments and primordial wisdom. There

the Bhagavan named Amoghasiddhi is revealing the

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Dharma"' and so on. Unless the dead person has a little familiarity with the stages of generation and completion, it will be very difficult for that person to be helped by such introductions. If these words of introduction come into the hearing of someone who does have a little familiarity with the stages of generation and completion, they will provide the great relief of fearlessness. [501]

If the guide has an awareness of the view, when the dying person experiences the dissolution into the [dark] attainment, the guide should imagine the dying person's consciousness as a stainless, clear, radiant, white syllable A, and should call out the dying person's name three times, and say three times, "O you child of good breeding, imagine your consciousness as a stainless white syllable A. O child of good breeding, the Brahma aperture on the crown of your head, which is like a vent, is the pathway to ascend upwards into openness. Transport yourself through there like a shooting star!"

The guide should nondually merge his own awareness with the consciousness of the other person and remain for awhile in meditative equipoise. Then he should imagine emerging from the Brahma aperture like the movement of a shooting star, dissolving up into the realm of Akanista. After reciting A five times, he should ascend while uttering PHAT three times. If the guide who is imbued with the glories of primordial wisdom and excellent qualities causes the vapor to rise from the Brahma aperture of the other person, that is a sign of success. If that does not happen, imagine immeasurable lights and light rays emanating from your heart, and all the jina mandalas of the three embodiments completely melt and converge into the form of five-colored masses of light. [502] Visualize in the space one cubit above the crown of the head of the person who has died the Buddha Amitabha, together with an assembly of bodhisattvas. At the heart of the Tathagata imagine a lotus and moon seat on which sits the

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dharmakaya Samantabhadra, one hand-span in height, naked, devoid of clothing or ornaments. At his heart visualize a white syllable A,

radiant like the moon. From their bodies masses of five-colored light, spreading forth like billowing clouds, enter the body, speech, and mind of the dead person. All his mental states and appearances melt into light, and his body becomes an empty pavilion of a body of light. In its center, those masses of light draw together and bless the life principle, cognition, and mind of the dead person, like placing a pillar in an empty abode of light. This tube of light reaches upwards to the A at the heart of Samantabhadra and extends downwards as far as the dead person's heart, where it stops. Inside it, twenty-one white syllables A are stacked from the heart up to the crown of the head, and imagine them to be of the essential nature of the life principle, cognition, and mind of the dead person. Uttering A PHAT twenty-one times, [503] imagine them gradually withdrawing upwards, then imagine the uppermost A dissolving into the A at the heart of Samantabhadra, like a shooting star. Uttering PHAT once, imagine the emergence of the buddha-field of Sukhavati just as it actually is. Uttering it a second time, imagine the dead person recognizing that buddha-field. Uttering it a third time, imagine him perfecting the power and achieving stability . This practice of bringing the buddha-field to mind and sustaining that as long as you can is profound and potent when applied to all manner of superior or inferior people.

If the guide does not know essentials of the stage of generation and has no familiarity with them, whatever he does, it will have no more power to benefit or protect than simply offering ordinary prayers of supplication. Therefore, the guides of the deceased should have confidence in the view and meditation, and in order to accomplish the welfare of others, they should train in the essentials of the stage of generation and of transference. If they do not succeed in such practice, [when they pretend to guide the dead] they are no

better than hunters and bandits. By deceiving others, they trap themselves, like spiders who get caught in their own webs. They pay the price for experiencing the suffering of the miserable states of existence, so this should be recognized.

This quintessential tantra, a fundamental tantra, a space treasury of the sugatagarbha, with its illumination of numerous entrances to the

originally pure, primordial wisdom of the youthful vase body, [504] is an entrance to methods for natural liberation in the state of reality-itself. The reasons why such a tantra has been revealed by myself, the original ground, the Teacher Saroruhavajra, to my emanated circle of disciples, who are not other than myself, are as follows. In earlier times, the teachings of the Great Perfection shone like the sun; and when sublime, supreme teachers explained them to people with [good] karma and fortune, first they would gain certainty by way of the view; then they would identify [awareness] and dispel their flaws by means of meditation; and finally, by remaining in the conduct of inactivity and by practicing, they all became siddhas and experienced the state of omniscient buddhahood. That is the unsurpassed quality of the profound path of the Vajra Heart [Tantra]. Nowadays, having no experience or familiarity with the view, and identifying merely the natural clarity of consciousness, however people meditate, they do not go beyond the ordinary; and there is no time when they achieve the fruition of omniscient buddhahood. Some teachers are expert at oral explanations, but they cannot show the path of liberation, so it is impossible for them to bring much benefit to the minds of others. Thus, teachers who can explain it are gradually becoming more and more rare, and there is no on who is practicing. [505] As a result, the teachings of the Great Perfection are lost to the point that they are becoming like a drawing of a butter-lamp. This [tantra] has been revealed because of the dependently originated circumstances of the animate and inanimate world in such times as this.

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Like the sun briefly appearing through a break in the clouds, this will not remain for long. Why? Because there are no teachers who know how to explain it, and there are few people who have the karma, prayers, and fortune [to receive it]. Thus, just as it has emerged from the absolute nature, it will withdraw into it again."

At these words, the entire assembly of disciples including Vidyavajra rejoiced and offered praise. Immediately the Teacher Saroruhavajra dissolved into a mass of light, and the disciples also vanished into that light. The light then increased in size, pervading all appearances. All appearances dissolved into light, and then the light merged with space. Space pervasively expanded without

bounds. Then from the nonobjective, empty absolute nature, these words arose, "O you people who practice the clear light Vajra Heart, listen! That is the way to become enlightened as a display of the equal purity of the nonduality of liberating oneself by means of realization and liberating others by means of compassion. [506]

"HUM HUM HUM. Lord of the three realms, Mahadeva, his supreme son, the basis of emanation of all the Protectors, Ganapati, the display as the great emptiness of samsara and nirvana, Dhatvisvari, the king who masters the three realms, the dark red Yaksakhattika, the lord of the whole universe, Grahamara of the poisonous razor, agents of the five elements, and the six parthivas and evil demons, together with Shulpalbar!* This king of tantras, which is the essence of the life force of all the jinas of the three times, and which synthesizes the quintessence of the Sutrayana, Mantrayana, and the ocean of tantras, this great Tantra Naturally Arisen from the Nature of Existence, is entrusted to you. Care for it with your samayas. Grant it to sublime individuals who are suitable vessels for it, and bring them to the state of liberation and omniscience.

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Keep it secret from those types of people who are not suitable vessels and who harbor false views. Demolish the faculties of the enemies of the Teachings who engage in false imputations and denials, and reduce them to minutia. Sustain the lives of those people who maintain, preserve, and cause these teachings to flourish, and provide them with conducive conditions. Engage in deeds that bring forth and expand disciples, the teachings, society, and strength, like a waxing moon. [507] Samaya. Sealed, sealed, sealed, the treasure is sealed, sealed in secrecy, profoundly sealed. Ithi."

The above remained as a command for eighteen human years, at the end of which, when the appropriate circumstances came to pass, at the meaningful request of the disciple Tshechu, the Mongolian Lama Phuntshok Trashi, and Lhaje Rigdzin Zangpo, the syllables brought forth from the absolute nature of the apparitional matrix of the clear light by Thragthung Dujom Dorje were written down by the Mongolian Lama Phuntshok Trashi and Lhaje Rigdzin Zangpo from

the region of Golok.

By the powerful blessings of the truth of the precious Three Jewels
And the Secret Mantra Vajrayana,
May all the fortunate men and women who see this
Practice it correctly, and maintain the lineage
Become perfectly enlightened as youthful vase bodies
In the dharmakaya, the realm of light of the original protector.

OM SVASTI SIDDHI.

1. In the all-pervasive, primordial, originally pure, innate nature,
The unceasing union of the vajra cloud of great bliss,
In the self-appearing displays of compassion to train disciples,

Wholly arises the Lord of Kings, Thragthung Dujom.

2. Your mind emerges from the space of the great expanse of the clear light,
The Great Perfection, which thoroughly transcends mentally fabricated meditation.
By entering the womb of ineffable great bliss,
You have merged in one taste with the awareness of the Guru Samantabhadra. [508]

3. When the spontaneously present dance of the matrix of apparitions
Completely appears in the inexhaustible ornamental wheels of the buddha-fields, teachers, and disciples,
The power to transform the universe in an instant
Infinitely manifests as a wondrous, pure spectacle.

4. Then the nada melody of indestructible reality-itself,
The Secret Vajra Tantra, Naturally Arisen from the Nature of Existence,
The ever so profound essence of the awareness of Samantabhadra,
Descends as a rain of Dharma that is the essence of a hundred thousand classes of tantras.

5. The ambrosial juice of speech of the pervasive expanse,

Scriptural authority and reasoning uncontaminated by falsity
These practical instructions that, when well taught, bring buddhahood within hand's reach within a single lifetime,
Ripen as the heart's power of those of good fortune.

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6. This is unlike ordinary treatises of scholars,
Unlike ordinary dohas of siddhas,
Unlike ordinary profound instructions,
And unlike ordinary practices that are promoted enthusiastically.

7. Its words of expression are few, but its expressed meaning is profound,
It is as difficult to find as the udumvara.
There are many who have come well and directly encountered Samantabhadra*;
Other than this, not a single word is needed.*

8. In this final era of the five dregs,
The great, synthesizing proclamation of the vajra prophecy,
"The revelation of the mind of Samantabhadra has emerged!"
Arises as an infallible, directly visible sign of virtue.

9. O fortunate friends who earnestly long for liberation, [509]
Do not salivate at many profound things.
Know one excellent treatise and witness total liberation here.
The elaborations of various teachings are cut short here.

10. Do not trouble yourself with seeking out the meanings of words
As you do for treatises of conventional logic.
Bring forth reverence and if you encounter the natural state without distraction,

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And you will certainly achieve the primordial wisdom of the lineage of blessings.

11. By hearing and encountering even a single word
Of such precious, infallible, unique teachings as these,
If one nakedly realizes the primordial wisdom of the dharmakaya,

Are those who maintain that correctly not actual jinas?

12. Therefore, this essential treasure brought forth by Sampho Theji,*
Is superior to the essenceless, illusory wealth
Of images of the dharmakaya that are priceless in the mundane world
And to supreme Dharma relics.*

13. Like a vajra promise made in a religious ritual,
Those discerning ones who long familiarize themselves
With the Ati teachings of the Great Perfection
Will eventually find satisfaction--that is the power of buddhahood.

14. If it is difficult to measure the collection of subtle, positive, compounded virtues,
Who can measure the full extent of the merit
Accumulated in the expanse of the absolute nature of the reality of the three realms,
Which is uncontaminated and uncompounded?

15. The innate reality is not an object of the intellect and it is ineffable.
All magically elucidating volumes of expressive words--

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When it comes to the inconceivable abode of deeds of the jinas--
[510] Are simply methods for engaging with the dispositions of disciples.

16. Apart from stainless deeds well done, may the adventitious delusions
Of all beings concerning non-existing appearances be naturally dispelled;
And may the uncontrived, self-arisen, nature of existence, the original ground,
Suchness that is free of elimination and acquisition, become manifest.

17. May this way of Dharma, like the disks of the sun and moon,
Remain firm and all-pervasive for as long as space remains;

And may the great lion's roar of the supreme yana
Crush the brains of the jackals of misconceptions.

18. Due to the sublime truth of the all-pervasive nature of existence, the Great Perfection,
The unsought, naturally arisen, spontaneously present nature of awareness,
Unmoving and permanent,
May we actualize the auspiciousness of Samantabhadra!

Those verses were brought forth as an inexhaustible treasure of Dharma offerings of the dharmakaya from the altruistic work of the glorious lord of men Tshewang Rigdzin Nampar Gyalwede. When he was requested to stay at the ngo mtshar bsam rgu 'grub pa'i gandhola Ogmin Kuntu Zangpo pho brang gi mchod sdong chen po, the flaws and errors that crept in through later redactions of this treatise were cleared out. By careful examination, a pure edition was

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established, and for its publication a few words of prayer were appended to the text. This was done by Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, who has the conceit of regarding himself as the reincarnation of the great vidyadhara who revealed this treasure. May the blessed conduct of teaching and practicing this, revelation of the clear light Great Perfection cause innumerable fortunate disciples to be liberated in the inner realm of the original ground. [511]

May the Great Perfection of the Earlier Translation School of the tradition of Padmasambhava,
The teachings of the profound treasure of the authoritative teacher of the essential, definitive meaning,
Never decline for as long as the world lasts,
But be preserved through teachings and practice!

Sarvada mangalam!

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THE VAJRA HEART TANTRA

Technical Terms in English

absolute nature (Tib. dbyings, Skt. dhatu) The ultimate nature of reality, often referred to as emptiness.

absolute nature of reality (Tib. chos kyi dbyings, Skt. dharmadhatu) The essential nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana.

afflicted cognition (Tib. nyon yid, Skt. klistamanas) The natural potency of the darkness of ignorance and delusion.

attentional referent (Tib. gtad so) The object of the mind that is involved in grasping.

awareness (Tib. rig pa, Skt. vidya) The comprehension of samsara and nirvana as being totally subsumed within great spiritual awakening, which entails a natural liberation in the ground absolute nature, the great, pure equality of samsara and nirvana

awareness that is present as the ground (Tib. gzhir gnas kyi rig pa) The all-pervasive, fundamental nature of awareness, which is equivalent to the dharmakaya

basis of designation (Tib. gdags gzhi) The objective basis on which a conceptual designation is made.

buddha-field (Tib. zhing khams, Skt. ksetra) A "pure realm," which is brought forth spontaneously from a buddha's mind.

buddha-nature (Tib. sangs rgyas kyi rigs, Skt. buddhadhatu) The primordially pure, essential nature of the mind, equivalent to awareness, which is none other than the dharmakaya, but may be regarded provisionally as one's capacity for achieving spiritual awakening.

chosen deity (Tib. yi dam, Skt. istadevata) The enlightened manifestation, or embodiment, which one chooses as one's primary object of refuge and meditative practice.

citta lamp of the flesh (Tib. tsiitta sha'i sgron ma) The "lamp" located at the heart and included among the six lamps discussed in the teachings on the Leap-over.

cogitation (Tib. bsam mno) Mental activity involving reification of the subject and object.

cognition (Tib. yid, Skt. manas) The mind of every sentient being, which serves as the basis for the emergence of all ideation, and which transforms into the objects of all appearances.

cognitive obscuration (Tib. shes bya'i sgrib pa, Skt. jneya-avarana) The subtle obscurations of the mind, specifically the habitual propensities of mental afflictions and the appearance of true existence, which impede the experience of omniscience.

complete, definite path (Tib. lam nges rdzogs) Within the Vajrayana, the path that reveals the deities and buddha-fields as definitely existent, self-defining objects, and which solely emphasizes the avenue of conventional, skillful means.

conceptual elaboration (Tib. spros pa, Skt. prapanca) Conceptual constructs such as those of existence, non-existence, birth, and cessation.

cone (Tib. a thung) A slender cone of light that is visualized in certain meditations, especially at the navel cakra.

consciousness (Tib. shes pa, mam par shes pa, Skt. jnana, vijnana) The clear and knowing qualities of the mind that emerge in the aspect of the object and are bound by reification.

contemplative (Tib. rnal 'byor pa, Skt. yogin) A practitioner of contemplation.

creative display (Tib. rtsal) An effulgence, or manifestation, such as the creative displays of primordial wisdom.

cultivation of the spirit (Tib. sems bskyed, Skt. cittotpada) The ultimate cultivation of the spirit entails knowing one's own essential nature as the homogenous, pervasive nature of being of samsara and nirvana, while the Mahayana, relative cultivation of the spirit is

developing an altruistic aspiration to achieve spiritual awakening for the benefit of all beings. The cultivation of the spirit for Hinayana practitioners entails developing motivations for spiritual practice appropriate to their respective paths.

definitive meaning (Tib. nges don, Skt. nitartha) The meaning of ultimate reality.

delusion (Tib. 'khrul ba) Principally the delusion of reifying oneself and other phenomena, which acts as the root of all other mental afflictions.

delusive appearance (Tib. 'khrul snang) The reified appearance of phenomena arising due to delusion.

descended total-ground (Tib. thog pheb kyi kun gzhi) The essential nature, or one taste, of all phenomena, which is free of conceptual elaboration.

direct vision of reality-itself (Tib. chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba) The first of the four visions that arise in the course of the Leap-over practice, in which one directly ascertains the nature of existence of suchness, or ultimate truth. This realization corresponds to the attainment of the first aryabodhisattva ground, and provides one the confidence of never returning to samsara.

directional guardian (Tib. phyogs skyong, Skt. dikpala) Powerful beings who guard the ten directions.

ego-grasping (Tib. ngar 'dzin, Skt. ahamkara) Reification of one's own identity.

eight classes of haughty non-human beings (Tib. mi ma yin sde brgyad) Classes of local gods.

eight collections of consciousness (Tib. mam shes kyi tshogs brgyad) The six sense consciousnesses, afflicted cognition, and total-ground consciousness.

eight freedoms (Tib. rnam thar brgyad, Skt. astauvimoksa) (1) The freedom of the formed observation of form, (2) the freedom of the formless observation of form, (3) the freedom of beauty, (4) the

freedom of limitless space, (5) the freedom of limitless consciousness, (6) the freedom of nothingness, (7) the freedom of the peak of mundane existence, and (8) the freedom of cessation.

eight great devas (Tib. lha chen po brgyad) Mahesvara, Indra, Brahma, Visnu, Kamesvara, Ganapati, Bhringiridhi, and Kumarasanmukha.

eight great nagas (Tib. klu chen po brgyad) Ananta, Taksaka, Atibala, Kulika, Vasuki, Sankhapala, Padma, and Varuna.

eight great planets (Tib. gza' chen po brgyad) Venus, Jupiter, the moon, Mercury, Mars, Rahula, the sun, and Saturn.

eight mundane concerns (Tib. 'jig rten chos brgyad) Material gain and loss, pleasure and pain, praise and abuse, and good and bad reputation.

eight qualities of water (Tib. chu'i yon tan brgyad) Cool, delicious, light, smooth, limpid, odorless, not harmful to the stomach or to the throat.

eight potencies (Tib. nus pa) Heavy, oily, mild, sharp, light, rough, hot, and cool.

embodiment (Tib. sku, Skt. kaya) An aspect of a buddha, including the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya.

emptiness (Tib. stong pa nyid, Skt. sunyata) The absence of true existence of all phenomena, which itself is not objectively or truly existent.

enlightenment (Tib. byang chub, Skt. bodhi) Spiritual awakening.

enmeshed mindfulness (Tib. 'jur bu'i dran pa) Mindfulness of the steady, vivid manifestation of thoughts without responding to them with hope and fear or joy and sorrow.

essential nature (Tib. ngo bo) The fundamental nature of a phenomenon, as in the case of awareness being the essential nature of the mind.

ethically neutral (Tib. lung ma bstan, Skt. avyakrta) Neither virtuous nor nonvirtuous.

expression (Tib. rtsal) A creative display, or manifestation, such as samsara and nirvana being expressions of awareness.

extrasensory perception (Tib. mngon par shes pa, Skt. abhijna) Exception modes of perception that arise along the path to enlightenment.

extinction into reality-itself (Tib. chos nyid zad pa) The fourth, and final, vision on the path of the Leap-over, in which all phenomena indescribably dissolve into the absolute nature. This stage corresponds to the attainment of the supreme ground of a spontaneously present vidyadhara on the mantra path, which surpasses the tenth ground known as the Cloud of Dharma.

five absolute natures (Tib. dbyings lnga, Skt. pancadhatu) The five primordial wisdoms.

five deeds of immediate retribution (Tib. mtshams med pa lnga) Killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an arhat, maliciously drawing the blood of a buddha, and causing a schism in the sangha. If one commits any such deed, one immediately falls to hell upon death, without spending any time in the intermediate state.

five derivative elements (Tib. 'byung phran lnga) Water, space, earth, fire, and air.

five embodiments (Tib. sku lnga, Skt. pancakaya) Dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, nirmanakaya, svabhavakaya, and vajrakaya.

five essential natures (Tib. ngo bo lnga) The five primordial wisdoms.

five great elements (Tib. 'byung ba chen po lnga) Lights of the five primary colors of white, blue, yellow, red, and green.

five, impure, samsaric vital energies (Tib. ma dag pa'i 'khor ba'i rlung lnga) Emerging vital energy, transformative vital energy, grasping vital energy, differentiating vital energy, and destructive

vital energy.

five poisons (Tib. dug lnga) Delusion, hatred, pride, attachment, and jealousy.

five primordial wisdoms (Tib. ye shes lnga, Skt. pancajnana) Mirror-like primordial wisdom, primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality, primordial wisdom of equality, primordial wisdom of discernment, and primordial wisdom of accomplishment.

five quintessences (Tib. mdangs ma lnga) The quintessences of the five primordial wisdoms.

fluid lasso lamp (Tib. rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma) In the Leap-over terminology , this is the lamp of the eyes, which are fluid and are able to apprehend objects far away, as if they were caught with a lasso. This lamp is like the flowers of a tree that has the citta lamp of the flesh as its root, and the hollow crystal kati channel as its trunk, and the term fluid lasso lamp is collectively given to all three, which are known as the three lamps of the vessel.

four occasions (Tib. dus bzhi) Pre-dawn, early morning, noon, and dusk.

Four Thoughts that rum the Mind (Tib. blo ldog rnam pa bzhi) Meditations on the precious human life of leisure and opportunity, death and impermanence, the miserable nature of samsara, and the nature of actions and their ethical consequences.

Four Immeasurables (Tib. tshad med bzhi, Skt. caturapramana) Loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity.

freedom from conceptual elaboration (Tib. spros pa dang bral ba) The second of the four stages of Mahamudra meditation.

gaining confidence (Tib. gding thob pa) Identifying awareness, then bringing forth spacious awareness, free of activity, and by practicing that uninterruptedly, finally achieving stability within oneself.

generic emblem (Tib. zad pa, Skt. krtsna, Pali kasina) Symbolic representations of the five elements, which are used in meditative

objects in the cultivation of meditative quiescence.

Great Perfection (Tib. rDzogs pa chen po, Skt. Mahasandhi) The ultimate spiritual vehicle and realization, according to the rNying ma order of Tibetan Buddhism.

Great Perfection of the complete, definite path (Tib. lam nges rdzogs kyi rdzogs chen) The simultaneous progression through all the grounds and paths by establishing with discerning wisdom the ethically neutral state of the Great Perfection that is present as the ground.

Great Perfection of the four modes of existence (Tib. gnas lugs bzhi'i rdzogs chen)

great transference rainbow body (Tib. 'ja' lus 'pho ba chen po) The highest level achievement of the rainbow body, associated with the dharmakaya, in which all the material aggregates of one's body are extinguished while one is still living, leaving only a body of light that is unperishing. With the achievement of the second level of the rainbow body, associated with the sambhogakaya, at death one's body dissolves into rainbow light, leaving only one's hair and nails behind. With the achievement of the third level of the rainbow body, associated with the nirmanakaya, at death one's body shrinks considerably in size, sometimes down to the size of an infant.

ground (Tib. gzhi, Skt. asraya) The ground of the whole of samsara and nirvana, which is the dharmakaya.

ground absolute nature (Tib. gzhi dbyings) The dharmakaya.

ground-awareness (Tib. gzhi'i rig pa, Skt. asrayavidya) The primordial nature of the mind, which is beyond the three times and all conceptual elaborations.

ground-consciousness (Tib. gzhi'i shes pa, Skt. asrayajnana) The unceasing stream of consciousness that goes from one life to another and finally to the state of spiritual awakening, so it may become virtuous or nonvirtuous. Only when its essential nature becomes manifest, is it seen to be of the nature of unstructured awareness (rig pa). As such, it seems to be identical to the total-ground

consciousness.

grounds and paths (Tib. sa lam, Skt. bhumimarga) The stages along which one progresses to spiritual awakening.

guardian of the doctrine (Tib. bka' srung) A powerful being who protects the Dharma.

guardian of the remains (Tib. lhag skyong) A being to whom the remains of the ganacakra are offered.

habitual propensity (Tib. bag chags, Skt. vasana) A mental imprint accumulated as a result of previous experiences or actions, which influences later events and conduct.

hollow crystal kati channel (ka ti shel gyi sbu gu can) Among the six lamps, this is a single channel, one-eighth the width of a hair of a horse's tail, with two branches that stem from inside the heart, curve around the back of the ears, and come to the pupils of the eyes.

ideology (Tib. grub mtha', Skt. siddhanta) A philosophical system of thought.

innate luster (Tib. rang gdangs) The natural luminosity of awareness.

insight (Tib. lhag mthong, Skt. vipasyana) Contemplative realization of the nature of phenomena.

intermediate state (Tib. bar do, Skt. antarabhava) The transitional process of becoming, following death and prior to one's next rebirth.

intermediate teachings (Tib. bka' bar pa) The Second turning of the Wheel of Dharma.

introspection (Tib. shes bzhin, Skt. samprajanya) The mental faculty by which one ascertains how the mind is functioning, which is crucial to all forms of meditation.

karmic energy (Tib. las rlung) A vital energy coursing through the body which is propelled by one's previous karma.

karmic momentum (Tib. las 'phro) The carry-over into this life of

one's karma from previous lifetimes.

lamp of the empty bindus (Tib. thig le stong pa'i sgron ma) The appearance of the five quintessences in luminous, spherical forms called bindus.

lamp of the pristine absolute nature (Tib. dbyings mam par dag pa'i sgron ma) The pristine expanse of space, in which appear bindus of five-colored lights and vertical and horizontal vajra-strands.

lamp of self-arisen wisdom (Tib. shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma) One's own awareness, the sugatagarbha, which witnesses the displays of primordial wisdom.

Leap-over (Tib. thod rgal) The second of the two phases of the practice of the Great Perfection, which is aimed at realizing the spontaneous manifestations of the dharmakaya.

life force channel (Tib. srog rtsa) The channel in the heart through which courses the life-sustaining wind.

meditative absorption (Tib. snyoms 'jug, Skt. samapatti) An advanced state of meditative concentration in the formless realm, including boundless consciousness, boundless space, nothingness, and neither- discernment- nor-non-discernment.

meditative experience (Tib. nyams) Mundane experiences produced by one's previous behavioral patterns, and occurring within the context of one's familiar conceptual framework. The normal response to such experiences is to grasp onto them by conceptually identifying and classifying them.

meditative stabilization (Tib. bsam gtan, Skt. dhyana) An advanced state of meditative concentration included in the form realm, including the four meditative stabilizations.

mental cognition (Tib. yid, Skt. manas) See cognition.

mental process (Tib. sems byung, Skt. caitta) A mental process that arises in conjunction with consciousness, by means of which one engages in various ways with the objects of apprehension.

mind-itself (Tib. sems nyid, Skt. cittata) The essential nature of the mind, which is awareness, also known as the sugatagarbha.

Mind Lineage of the Jinas (Tib. rGyal ba dgongs pa'i brgyud pa) The most fundamental lineage of the Great Perfection that arises due to the single, absolute nature of the minds of all the jinas of the three times.

mindfulness (Tib. dran pa, Skt. smrti) The mental faculty of attending continuously, without forgetfulness, to an object with which one is already familiar.

mirror-like primordial wisdom (Tib. me long Ita bu'i ye shes, Skt. adarsajnana) A primordial wisdom that is of a limpid, clear nature free of contamination, which allows for the unceasing appearances of all manner of objects.

mundane existence (Tib. srid pa, Skt. bhava) The cycle of existence, in which one is propelled from life to life by the force of one's mental afflictions and karma.

natural path of the powerful view (Tib. lta ba gyad kyi lam) The method by which one achieves stability in one's own awareness; ordinary appearances and clinging are transferred to the nature of buddha-fields; and one's body, speech, and mind are transferred to the domain of the three vajras.

naturally settled mindfulness (Tib. rang babs kyi dran pa) The state of awareness in which consciousness mindfully comes to rest in its own state, and with little clinging to experiences, it settles into its own natural state free of modification.

nature of existence (Tib. gnas lugs) The fundamental mode of existence of all phenomena, which is emptiness.

one taste (Tib. ro gcig) The third of the four stages of Mahamudra meditation.

Oral Lineage of Individuals (Tib. gang zag snyan khung gi brgyud pa) The lineage of the Great Perfection by which the practical instructions naturally arise as an oral lineage and an entrance to the disciples path, revealed by themselves, not by human beings, as an

apparitional display of primordial wisdom.

ornamental wheel (Tib. rgyan gyi 'khor lo) A metaphor for the qualities of a buddha. The term ornament refers to those excellent qualities, and the term circle refers to the all-encompassing, inexhaustible nature of those outer, inner, and secret qualities.

personal identity (Tib. gang zag gi bdag, Skt. pudgalatmya) An intrinsically existent self, which is actually nonexistent but which is grasped as real by the deluded mind.

phenomenal identity (Tib. chos kyi bdag, Skt. dharmatmya) An intrinsically existent identity of phenomena other that the self, which is actually nonexistent but which is grasped as real by the deluded mind.

philosophical stance (Tib. spros pa'i mtha') A conceptual c:onstruct such as that of existence and nonexistence, which is apprehended by way of dualistic grasping.

practical instructions (Tib. gdams ngag, Skt. upadesa) Quintessential guidance in spiritual practice, which synthesizes the teachings of the buddhas into specific practices for specific individuals according to their needs.

practice of deliverance (Tib. bsgral las) The ferocious activity of taking someone's life and delivering this person to a higher state of existence.

precept (Tib. man ngag, Skt. upadesa) See practical instructions.

primordial wisdom (Tib. ye shes, Skt. jnana) The manifest state of the ground, which is self-arisen, naturally clear, free of outer and inner obscuration, and is the all-pervasive, limpid, clear infinity of space, free of contamination.

primordial wisdom of the absolute nature of reality (Tib. chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes, Skt. dharmadhatujnana) The primordial wisdom the essential nature of which is primordial, great emptiness, and which realizes the absolute nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana.

primordial wisdom of accomplishment (Tib. bya ba sgrub pa'i ye shes, Skt. krtyanusthanajnana) The primordial wisdom by which all pure, free, simultaneously perfected deeds and activities are accomplished naturally, of their own accord.

primordial wisdom of discernment (Tib. so sor rtog pa'i ye shes, Skt. pratyaveksanajnana) The primordial wisdom that is an unceasing avenue of illumination of the qualities of primordial wisdom,

primordial wisdom of equality (Tib. mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes, Skt. samatajnana) The primordial wisdom that equally pervades the nonobjective emptiness of the whole of samsara and nirvana.

primordial wisdom of knowing reality as it is (Tib. ji ita ba mkhyen pa'i ye shes, Skt. yathavidjnana) The primordial knowledge of the ultimate nature of existence.

primordial wisdom of seeing the full range of reality (Tib. ji snyed pa gzigs pa 'i ye shes, Skt. yavadvidjnana) The primordial knowledge of all phenomena throughout space and time.

progress in meditative experience (Tib. nyams gong 'phel ba) The second of the four stages on the path of the Leap-over, in which all appearances during and after meditation transform into displays of light and rainbow bindus with ever increasing clarity, until finally all ordinary appearances vanish and dissolve into continuous, omnipresent displays of visions of light. This stage corresponds to the attainment of the fifth ground known as the Difficult to Practice.

propitiatory practice (Tib. bsnyen sgrub, Skt. sevasadhana) A meditative practice especially on the stage of generation that deepens the relationship between oneself and one's chosen deity.

provisional meaning (Tib. drang don, Skt. neyartha) The symbolic, relative, or contextual meaning, as opposed to the actual, ultimate, or absolute meaning.

quiescence (Tib. zhi gnas, Skt. samatha) An advanced degree of meditative concentration in which attentional stability and vividness have been developed to the point that one can fully engage in the cultivation of insight.

quintessence (Tib. dvangs ma) The pristine essence of a phenomenon.

ransom-torma (Tib. glud gtor) A ritual offering made to a being to persuade them not to interfere with one's spiritual practice.

reaching consummate awareness (Tib. rig pa tshad phebs) The third of the four stages on the path of the Leap-over, in which the entire universe appears to be totally pervaded with rainbow light and blazing fire, and everything appears as bindus in which the five classes of male and female peaceful and wrathful divine embodiments appear in union. This stage of spontaneous manifestation corresponds to the attainment of the eighth ground known as the Immovable.

real going for refuge in the mode of being (Tib. gnas lugs don gyi skyabs 'gro) Determining that all phenomena in the whole of samsara and nirvana are of an empty, identityless nature, and finally confirming by means of one's own experience that one's own awareness has never been anything but a display of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms.

reality-itself (Tib. chos nyid, Skt. dharmata) The essential nature of phenomena, which is emptiness, also known as the absolute nature.

realization (Tib. rtogs pa) The. subtle, exact knowledge of how all appearing phenomena. are nonobjective and empty from their own side, culminating m the decisive knowledge of the one taste of great emptiness, the fact that all of samsara and nirvana naturally arises from the expanse of the ground and is not established as anything else.

samadhi of all appearances (Tib. kun tu snang ba'i ting nge 'dzin) The capacity for all appearances to arise.

samadhi of suchness (Tib. de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin, Skt. tathata- samadhi) Meditation on the entire universe dissolving into the absolute nature as illusory apparitions.

segregation (Tib. ru shan) The Leap-over practice of separating samsara from nirvana with respect to one's body, speech, and mind.

self-concept (Tib. bdag rtog) One's reified sense of one's own identity.

seven enjoyments (Tib. nyer spyod bdun) The seven offerings of drinking water, water for bathing the feet, flowers, incense, light, perfume, and food.

seven inner preliminaries (Tib. nang gi sngon 'gro bdun) (1) taking refuge and cultivating the Spirit of Awakening, (2) offering prostrations, (3) offering the mandala, (4) practicing the purificatory meditation and mantra of Vajrasattva, (5) guru yoga, (6) transference of consciousness, and (7) Severance.

seven types of precious substances (Tib. rin po che sna bdun) Ruby, sapphire, lapis-lazuli, emerald, diamond, pearl, and coral. An alternate list includes lapis-lazuli, gold, silver, crystal, kakkatana, red pearl, and iron.

Severance (Tib. gcod) A meditative practice of imaginatively offering up one's entire being as a means to realizing the empty nature of all phenomena, severing all clinging onto the appearances of the three realms, and realizing that all gods and demons are none other than one's own appearances.

sign (Tib. mtshan ma, Skt. nimitta) An object grasped by the conceptual mind.

sin (Tib. sdig pa, Skt. papa) A nonvirtue that karmically ripens in this or future lifetimes as misery and adversity.

six lamps (Tib. sgron me drug) The three lamps of the vessel--namely, the citta lamp of the flesh, the hollow crystal kati channel, and the fluid lasso lamp--and the three lamps of the vital essence--namely, the lamp of the pristine absolute nature, the lamp of the empty bindu, and the lamp of self-arisen wisdom.

space-release (Tib. klong grol) A natural state of liberation in which appearances and awareness become simultaneous, so things seem to be released simply upon being known. Thus, arising and release are simultaneous. As soon as things merely arise from their own space, they are released back into their own space, like lightning that

flashes from the sky and vanishes back into space.

spirit of aspiring for awakening (Tib. smon pa'i sems bskyed, Skt. pranidhana-bodhicitta) In the context of the Great Perfection, this is comprehending the nature of the whole of samsara and nirvana by means of discerning wisdom.

spirit of awakening (Tib. byang chub kyi sems, Skt. bodhicitta) In the context of the Great Perfection, the primordial, originally pure ground, which pervades the whole of samsara and nirvana. The nominal cultivation of the spirit of awakening entails bringing forth the motivation to liberate all sentient beings of the three worlds from the ocean of suffering of mundane existence and bring them to the state of omniscience.

spirit of venturing towards awakening (Tib. 'jug pa'i sems bskyed, Skt . prasthana-bodhicitta) In the context of the Great Perfection, this is the perception of samsara and nirvana as displays of the dharmakaya.

spiritual awakening (Tib. byang chub, Skt. bodhi) Enlightenment in which all obscurations are purified and all excellent qualities are brought to fulfillment.

spiritual mentor (Tib. bla ma, Skt. guru) A spiritual teacher who leads one to the state of liberation and spiritual awakening.

spiritual vehicle (Tib. theg pa, Skt. yana) A theoretical and practical system of spiritual development leading to spiritual awakening.

stage of generation (Tib. bskyed rim, Skt. utpattikrama) A Vajrayana system of practice, corresponding to Mahayoga, in which one's own body, speech, and mind are regarded as displays of the vajra body, speech, and mind of one's chosen deity. As a result of such practice, one achieves stability upon one's own awareness; ordinary appearances and clinging are transferred to the nature of buddha-fields; and one's body, speech, and mind are transformed into the three vajras.

substantial cause (Tib. nyer len) A substantial cause of a phenomenon is a prior phenomenon that actually transforms into the subsequent phenomenon that it produces, as a seed transforms into a

sprout

suchness (Tib. de bzhin nyid, Skt. tattata) The ineffable reality of emptiness, the ultimate nature of all phenomena.

supreme son kila (Tib. phur pa sras mchog) The wrathful manifestation of one's chosen deity .

Symbolic Lineage of the Vidyadharas (Tib. rig 'dzin brda yi brgyud pa) The lineage of the Great Perfection by which the symbolic signs of the space treasury of reality-itself are spontaneously released without reliance upon the stages of spiritual training and practice.

ten fields (Tib. zhing bcu) (1) Destroying the Teaching, (2) despising the Three Jewels, (3) robbing the possessions of the Sangha, (4) abusing the Mahayana, (5) threatening the bodies of spiritual mentors, (6) holding vajra siblings and friends in contempt, (7) creating obstacles to spiritual practice, (8) being utterly devoid of mercy and compassion, (9) lacking samayas and vows, and (10) holding false views concerning actions and their consequences.

three doors of liberation (Tib. mam thar sgo gsum) Emptiness, signlessness, and desirelessness.

Three Jewels (Tib. dkon mchog gsum, Skt. triratna) The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

three modes of appearances (Tib. snang tshul gsum) Appearances in the form of one's environment, one's body, and the five sensory objects.

three primordial wisdoms (Tib. ye shes gsum) Detached, unimpeded, primordial wisdom of all phenomena in the past, present, and future.

three realms (Tib. khams gsum, Skt. tridhatu) The desire realm, form realm, and formless realm.

three roots (Tib. rtsa ba gsum) The spiritual mentor, the chosen deity , and the c;Iaki11i.

three secrets (Tib. gsang ba gsum) The body, speech, and mind of a

buddha.

three sweet offerings (Tib. mngar gsum) White sugar, molasses, and honey.

three types of modification (Tib. bcos pa rnam gsum) The three types of modification of one's body, speech, and mind.

three white offerings (Tib. dkar gsum) Milk, curd, and butter.

total-ground (Tib. kun gzhi, Skt. alaya) A state of consciousness that is immaterial and non-conceptual, a space-like vacuity and blankness in which appearances are impeded. This state is experienced in deep, dreamless sleep, when one faints, and when one dies.

total-ground consciousness (Tib. kun gzhi mam shes, Skt. alayavijnana) An inwardly-directed, brilliant state of consciousness in which no thoughts or appearances arise and which is preceded by an experience of emptiness and luminosity .

training in malleability (Tib. mnyen btsal) A Leap-over practice in which one visualizes hum syllables emerging from and withdrawing back into one's heart as a means to gain mastery over one's vital energies and mind.

training in power (Tib. rtsal sbyang ba) A Leap-over practice in which one forcefully, meditatively permeates one's environment and body with hum syllables, finally dissolving them all into emptiness.

transitional process (Tib. bar do, Skt. antarabhava) Any one of the six transitional processes of living, dreaming, meditative stabilization, dying, reality-itself, and the transitional process of becoming.

transitional process of becoming (Tib. srid ba bar do) The dream-like intermediate state immediately following the transitional process of reality-itself, in which one is on one's way to one's next rebirth.

transference and merging into a domain (Tib. 'pho ba grong 'jug)

The culminating phase of the stage of generation.

transference (Tib. 'pho ba) According to the Great Perfection, the unsurpassed "transference" is the realization of the pristine space of the absolute nature of reality, the sugatagarbha.

treasure-revealer (Tib. gter ston) A highly realized being who reveals precious spiritual teachings concealed either in the ground by path enlightened beings or reveals such teachings from the nature of one's own awareness, as in the case of the revelation of this treatise by Dudjom Linpga.

two goals (Tib. don gnyis) The goals for oneself and the goals for others.

universal ground (Tib. spyi gzhi) Emptiness, as the foundation for the whole of samsara and nirvana.

ultimate spirit of awakening (Tib. byang chub kyi sems, Skt. bodhicitta) The realization of that great reality that pervades the whole of samsara and nirvana.

vajra-essences (Tib. rdo rje'i snying po) The syllables om, ah, and hum.

vajra-strand luster of awareness (Tib. rig gdangs rdo rje lu gu rgyud)

vice (Tib. sdig pa, Skt. papa) A non-virtuous deed of the body, speech, or mind.

vital essence (Tib. bcud) The vital core of such phenomena as the five elements.

wisdom (Tib. shes rab, Skt. prajna) The knowledge that determines everything included in the phenomenal world of samsara and nirvana as being empty, identityless, and nonobjective, such that all appearances and mental states are gradually extinguished in the absolute nature.

wisdom of pristine space (Tib. nam mkha' rnam par dag pa'i shes rab) The recognition and ascertainment of all of samsara and nirvana

as displays of space.

youthful vase body (Tib. gzhon nu bum sku, Skt. kumarakalasakaya) The awareness of Samantabhadra, which is of the oceanic nature of the embodiments and primordial wisdoms having six qualities: (1) externally luminous consciousness is withdrawn into itself, and the great, internally luminous, original, ground-absolute nature appears to itself, (2) it transcends the ground, (3) it differentiates, (4) it is liberated upwards, (5) it arises from nothing else, and (6) it dwells in its own place. This state of awakening is likened to a vase, for, as the sole bindu, it encompasses the whole of samsara and nirvana, while transcending the three times. It is called "youthful," for it is not subject to aging or degeneration, and it is called a "body" for it is the aggregate of all the inexhaustible bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and enlightened activities of all the buddhas.

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